The Works Of John Witherspoon: Containing Essays, Sermons, &c., On Important Subjects ... Together With His Lectures On Moral Philosophy Eloquence And Divinity, His Speeches In The American Congress, And Many Other Valuable Pieces, Never Before...

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THE

WORKS

OF

JOHN WITHERSPOON, D. D.

SOMETIME MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL AT PAISLEY, AND LATE PRESIDENT OF PRINCETON COLLEGE, IN NEW JERSEY.

CONTAINING

ESSAYS, SERMONS, &c.

ON

IMPORTANT SUBJECTS;

INTENDED TO ILLUSTRATE AND ESTABLISH THE DOCTRINE OF SALVATION BY GRACE, AND TO POINT OUT ITS INFLUENCE ON HOLINESS OF LIFE.

TOGETHER WITH HIS

LECTURES ON MORAL PHILOSOPHY, ELOQUENCE AND DIVINITY;

HIS SPEECHES IN THE AMERICAN CONGRESS;

AND MANY OTHER VALUABLE PIECES, NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED IN THIS COUNTRY.

VOL. V.

EDINBURGH:

PRINTED FOR J. OGLE, PARLIAMENT-SQUARE; M. OGLE, GLASGOW; OGLES, DUNCAN, & COCHRAN, LONDON; AND T. JOHNSTON, DUBLIN.

1815.

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ACTS xvii. 6. laſt clauſe.

Theſe that have turned the world upſide down are come hither alſo.

MY BRETHREN,

YOU have had, of late, frequent opportunities of hearing diſcourſes on the miniſterial character and office. Theſe ſubjects indeed have, on occaſions of this and a ſimilar nature, been ſo often and ſo well

handled, that it is hard to ſay any thing on them which ſhall not be either bare repetition, or an alteration very much for the worſe. I have therefore made choice at this time of a ſubject ſomewhat different, but the uſefulneſs of which, both to miniſters and people, may be eaſily diſcerned.

A great part of the ſacred volume conſiſts of hiſtory. And, as the knowledge of paſt events, and the hiſtory of mankind in general, is an improving ſtudy, ſo there is no object of ſtudy more pleaſant or more profitable, than that extenſive view of the great plan of Providence which is exhibited to us in the word of God. There we have acceſs to obſerve the power, the wiſdom, and the grace of the various revelations of the divine will given in ſucceſſive ages, their correſpondence one to another, and how well each is ſuited to the ſeaſon and other circumſtances of its diſcovery. Above all, it is uſeful and delightful to obſerve the perfect union and harmony of the whole, and the ſeveral ſtriking and diſtinguiſhing characters that are to be found on all the works of the one eternal and unchangeable God.

This uniformity is in nothing more remarkable, than in the ſufferings of good men and their cauſes. True religion being the ſame in ſubſtance in every age, we may expect to find a very ſtrong likeneſs in all the real ſervants of God, however diſtant the periods in which they make their appearance. A conformity of ſtate alſo may be expected, as well as a ſimilarity of character. They have the ſame end in view, they tread in the ſame path, and therefore muſt meet with reſiſtance from the ſame enemies.

There was from the beginning, and there will be to the end of the world, a ſtrife and conflict between the righteous and the wicked, between "the ſeed of the woman, and the ſeed of the ſerpent." And, in particular, it is natural to ſuppoſe that ſlander and calumny will be always one of the weapons uſed by the enemies of the truth. We have no reaſon then to be ſurpriſed, that every good man ſhould have occaſion to ſay with the Pſalmiſt David, and with a greater than he, the Son of David, "They laid to my charge things that I knew not."

This was the caſe with the apoſtle Paul and his companion, in the paſſage of hiſtory of which my text is a part. But the nature of the accuſation here brought againſt them ſeems to be ſingular, and to merit particular attention. They were the ſervants and the miniſters of the Prince of peace. Their office was to preach and publiſh the goſpel of peace. Their doctrine was full of meekneſs and love. They diſcovered the love of God to men: and, after the example of their Maſter, they charged men to love one another. They were mean in their outward appearance, and neither poſſeſſed nor claimed any earthly dominion. In one word, they had nothing about them that one would think could give jealouſy to the civil power, that could ſeem formidable or dangerous to any character or claſs of men. Yet here they are charged as ſeditious, as diſturbers of the public peace, as enemies to the government. "Theſe that have turned the world upſide down, are come hither alſo.—Theſe all do contrary to the decrees of Ceſar, ſaying, That there is another king, one Jeſus." What ſort of an accuſation is this?

not only falſe but improbable. Does not the arch-enemy, the accuſer of the brethren, ſeem to have failed in his uſual ſkill? Is there the leaſt proſpect of ſucceſs in ſo groundleſs a charge?

But what ſhall we ſay if upon an accurate examination it be found, that the ſame charge hath been brought againſt the ſervants of God in every age? that none hath been advanced with greater boldneſs, and none with greater ſucceſs? Nay, perhaps, that it is the ſingle ſtanding charge from which their enemies have never departed ſince the beginning of the world, and which, of all others, hath been moſt readily and moſt univerſally believed. In other inſtances, the reproaches thrown upon the children of God have been oppoſite, and mutually deſtructive of each other. Chriſt himſelf, when his zeal in his Father's buſineſs made him forget to eat bread, was ſaid to be beſide himſelf, and mad. At other times he was called a cunning deceiver, and maſter of the curious arts. But in this his enemies, and thoſe of his people, have never varied; and their ſucceſs has been equal to their malice. They crucified him as an enemy to Ceſar, with the title of uſurpation written over him; and they have compelled all his diſciples after him to bear his croſs, and to groan under the weight of the ſame unjuſt and ſlanderous charge.

There are few ſubjects more worthy of the ſerious attention of thoſe who firmly believe the word of God; none which will afford greater occaſion to adore the myſterious depth of divine providence, or furniſh more inſtructive leſſons to ſuch as deſire to hold on with ſteadineſs in the paths of true religion.

Above all, this ſubject may be uſeful to miniſters of the goſpel. It will contribute to aſcertain the character which they ought to bear; to direct them in their duty; to prepare them for, and fortify them againſt the trials which it is impoſſible they can avoid.

In diſcourſing further upon this ſubject, it is propoſed, through the aſſiſtance of divine grace,

I. By a ſhort hiſtorical deduction, chiefly from the holy Scriptures, to ſhew, That the character of ſeditious, troubleſome, and diſorderly, hath been conſtantly given by wicked men to the ſervants of God.

II. To inquire, and endeavour to point out what it is in true religion that gives occaſion to this charge, and makes the world prone to believe it.

In the laſt place, To make ſome practical improvement of what may be ſaid.

I return to the firſt of theſe, viz.

I. By a ſhort hiſtorical deduction to ſhew, That the character of ſeditious, troubleſome, and diſorderly, hath been conſtantly given by wicked men to the ſervants of God.—It would not be difficult to point out ſomething of this ſpirit prevailing in the world, from the life of almoſt every good man whoſe name ſtands upon record, however ſhort and general the account be that is given of many of them in Scripture. But, as much of what might properly enough fall under this head, will be neceſſary in the illuſtration of the ſecond, to prevent confuſion and repetition I ſhall content myſelf with ſome leading inſtances, in very different ages, from the earlieſt to the lateſt times.

The firſt I ſhall mention is a paſſage as extraordinary in its nature, and as ſingular in its circumſtances, as any that hiſtory affords. It is the meeting of Ahab and Elijah, in the time of a great famine in the land of Iſrael. Ahab, that profane prince, had, by his apoſtaſy and idolatry, brought down the judgment of a righteous God, both on his kingdom and on his houſe. We are told, "That he did more to provoke the Lord God of Iſrael to anger, than all the kings of Iſrael that were before him," 1 Kings xvi. 33. He had perſecuted the worſhippers of the true God with unrelenting violence; and, as it was natural to expect, he hated with uncommon rancour, and diſtinguiſhed by uncommon ſeverity, all the prophets who continued ſtedfaſt in the cauſe of truth. As many of them as he could lay hold of, he had put to death. He had hunted for Elijah, not only through all the kingdom of Iſrael, but through the neighbouring nations, as we find related by Obadiah, his principal ſervant: "As the Lord thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom whither my lord hath not ſent to ſeek thee: and when they ſaid, He is not there; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation that they found thee not," 1 Kings xviii. 10. After all this ſeverity on his part, when Elijah by the command of God went out to meet him, ſee the form of his ſalutation: "And it came to paſs when Ahab ſaw Elijah, that Ahab ſaid unto him, Art thou he that troubleth Iſrael?" 1 Kings xviii. 17. To this the prophet makes the following ſtrong and juſt reply: "I have not troubled Iſrael, but thou and thy Father's houſe have troubled Iſrael, in that thou haſt

forſaken the commandments of the Lord, and thou haſt followed Baalim."

Another inſtance ſimilar to the former may be found in Jehoſhaphat and Ahab's conſultation before going out to battle. "And Jehoſhaphat ſaid, Is there not here a prophet of the Lord beſides, that we may inquire of him? "And the king of Iſrael ſaid unto Jehoſhaphat, There is yet one man (Micaiah the ſon of Imlah) by whom we may inquire of the Lord; but I hate him, for he doth not propheſy good concerning me, but evil," 1 Kings xxii. 7, 8. Here, you ſee, Micaiah was the object of hatred and averſion, becauſe he denounced the judgment of God againſt the king's wickedneſs. That vengeance which he himſelf not only merited, but ſolicited by his crimes, was attributed to malice in the prophet.

See an inſtance of a general accuſation of this kind againſt all the worſhippers of the true God, by Haman in the book of Eſther. "And Haman ſaid unto king Ahaſuerus, There is a certain people ſcattered abroad, and diſperſed among the people in all the provinces of thy kingdom, and their laws are diverſe from all people, neither keep they the king's laws; therefore it is not for the king's profit to ſuffer them," Eſther iii. 8.

The prophet Jeremiah met with the ſame treatment at different times. Neither prince, nor prieſts, nor prophets, were able to bear without reſentment the threatenings which he denounced in the name of God. "Now it came to paſs, when Jeremiah had made an end of ſpeaking all that the Lord had commanded him to ſpeak unto all the people, that the

prieſts, and the prophets, and all the people, took him, ſaying, Thou ſhalt ſurely die. Why haſt thou propheſied in the name of the Lord, ſaying, This houſe ſhall be like Shiloh, and this city ſhall be deſolate without an inhabitant? and all the people were gathered againſt Jeremiah in the houſe of the Lord," Jer. xxvi. 8, 9. "Then ſpake the prieſts and the prophets unto the princes and to all the people, ſaying, This man is worthy to die, for he hath propheſied againſt this city, as you have heard with your ears," Jer. xxvi. 11. We find him afterwards expreſsly accuſed of treachery on the ſame account. "And when he was in the gate of Benjamin, a captain of the ward was there, whoſe name was Irijah, the ſon of Shelemiah, the Son of Hananiah, and he took Jeremiah the prophet, ſaying, Thou falleſt away to the Chaldeans," Jer. xxxvii. 13. See alſo chap. xxxviii. 4.

The prophet Amos is another inſtance, preciſely parallel to the laſt. Becauſe of his fidelity to God, he was invidiouſly repreſented as an enemy to the king. "Then Amaziah the prieſt of Bethel ſent to Jeroboam king of Iſrael, ſaying, Amos hath conſpired againſt thee in the midſt of the houſe of Iſrael: the land is not able to bear all his words," Amos vii. 10.

Our bleſſed Lord and Saviour fell under the ſame accuſation. However plain and artleſs his carriage, he is called a deceiver of the people. "There was much murmuring among the people concerning him, for ſome ſaid, He is a good man; others ſaid, Nay, but he deceiveth the people," John vii. 12. His enemies endeavoured to embroil him with the civil

government by this inſidious queſtion, "Is it lawful to give tribute to Ceſar or not?" And that which brought him at laſt to the croſs was the ſame pretended crime. "And from thenceforth Pilate ſought to releaſe him; but the Jews cried out, ſaying, If thou let this man go, thou art not Ceſar's friend: whoſoever maketh himſelf a king, ſpeaketh againſt Ceſar," John xix. 12.

I ſhall cloſe this view of the Scripture hiſtory with the paſſage of which my text is a part. The whole crime of the apoſtle Paul and his companion was preaching the doctrine of the croſs of Chriſt, his great and darling theme. We are told he opened and "alleged, that Chriſt muſt needs have ſuffered and riſen again from the dead." Then the Jews, to whom this doctrine always was a ſtumbling-block, were "moved with envy," and endeavoured to inflame the reſentment of the idolatrous multitude; they took for their aſſociates the moſt wicked and profligate: "Certain lewd fellows of the baſer ſort." They "ſet all the city in an uproar;" and as, no doubt, the friends of Paul and Silas would endeavour to protect them from the injurious aſſault, their enemies very gravely charge them as the authors of the confuſion, both there and elſewhere. "They that have turned the world upſide down, are come hither alſo."

Having produced theſe inſtances from the holy Scriptures, which are liable to no exception, I ſhall ſay but little on the ſubſequent periods of the church. Only, in general, the ſame ſpirit will be found to have prevailed in every age. Whoever will take the pains to look into the hiſtory of the church be-

fore the Reformation, cannot fail to obſerve, that when any one, either among the clergy or laity, was bold enough to reprove the errors in doctrine, or the ambition, luxury, and worldly lives of his cotemporaries, he was immediately branded as a factious and diſorderly perſon, and often ſeverely puniſhed as an enemy to the peace of the church.

That this was the caſe with the firſt reformers, both at home and abroad, is too well known to need any proof. And we have had ſtill more recent examples of it in both parts of the united kingdom. The noble ſtruggle which many in England made, about an hundred years ago, for their liberties ſacred and civil, ſtill bears the name of the grand rebellion. And it is remarkable, that however juſt a title they had to ſtand up for their rights as men and Chriſtians, yet their doing ſo at that time was in a great meaſure owing to the fury and violence of their enemies, who were, in every reſpect, the aggreſſors. A very judicious hiſtorian ſays on this ſubject, "That which, upon the whole, was the great cauſe of the parliament's ſtrength and the king's ruin, was that the debauched rabble through the land took all that were called Puritans for their enemies; ſo that if a man did but pray in his family, or were but heard repeat a ſermon, or ſing a pſalm, they preſently cried out, Rebels, roundheads, and all their money and goods that were portable proved guilty, how innocent ſoever they were themſelves. This it was that filled the armies and garriſons of the parliament with ſober pious men. Thouſands had no mind to meddle with the wars, but greatly deſi-

red to live peaceably at home, when the rage of ſoldiers and drunkards would not ſuffer them *."

And in Scotland, after the reſtoration, though there was no ſtruggle for civil liberty, all who choſe to obey God rather than man, either in the ſubſtance or circumſtances of religious duties, were charged with treaſon, and ſuffered as rebels. They were expelled from the church, yet cenſured as ſchiſmatics. They were haraſſed, fined and impriſoned, when living in peace, without any fault but "concerning the law of their God," and yet complained of as troubleſome. They were baniſhed, excommunicated, and denied the common benefits of life; and yet, when the extreme rigour of their oppreſſors compelled them to take up arms in ſelf-defence, they were condemned in form of law for reſiſting that government which had denied them its protection.

I forbear to add any more particular examples; but from the deduction above given, it will plainly appear, that worldly men have been always diſpoſed, firſt to oppreſs the children of God, and then to complain of injury from them, that by ſlander they might vindicate their oppreſſion. Their ſlander, too, hath ſtill run in the ſame ſtrain; troublers of Iſrael, deceivers of the people, enemies to Ceſar, and turners of the world upſide down, have been the opprobrious titles generally given to the moſt upright and moſt faithful men, in every age and country.

We proceed now,

II. In the ſecond place, to inquire, What it is in

* Calamy's Life of Baxter, chap. iv.

true religion that gives occaſion to this charge, and makes the world prone to believe it.

That there muſt be ſomething of this kind is very evident. So uniform an effect could not take place without an adequate cauſe. And, to a ſerious and attentive obſerver, I am perſuaded it is not difficult to diſcern. The general cauſe of this effect is, that, in an equivocal ſenſe, the charge is juſt. True religion does indeed give trouble and uneaſineſs to wicked men, while they continue ſuch; and it cannot be ſuppoſed but they will deeply reſent it. In order to illuſtrate this a little more fully, I beg your attention to the three following obſervations.

1. The example of the ſervants of God is a continual and ſenſible reproach to the contrary conduct of the men of the world. Nothing can preſerve peace to any man, but ſome meaſure of ſelf-ſatisfaction. As a deceived heart turns the wicked aſide, ſo the continuance of ſelf-deceit is neceſſary to his taſting thoſe pleaſures of ſin in which his miſtaken happineſs is placed. To reproach his conduct, therefore, is to diſturb his dream, and to wound his peace. And as pride, however finely diſguiſed, has the dominion in every unrenewed heart, how offenſive muſt every ſpecies of reproof be to men of this character? Now, is not the example of every good man, a ſevere and ſenſible, though ſilent reproof to the wicked? With whatever ſpecious arguments men may ſometimes plead for ſin, with whatever falſe pretences they may often excuſe and palliate it to their own minds, when it is brought into one view with true religion, it is not able to bear the compariſon. The example of good men to the

wicked is, like the ſun upon a weak eye, diſtreſſing and painful. It is excellent in itſelf, but it is offenſive to them. If I may ſpeak ſo, it flaſhes light upon the conſcience, rouſes it from a ſtate of inſenſible ſecurity, points its arrows, and ſharpens its ſting. What elſe was it that produced the firſt act of violence that ſtands upon record, the murder of Abel by his brother Cain? Of this the apoſtle John ſpeaks in the following terms: "Not as Cain, who was of that wicked one, and ſlew his brother: and wherefore ſlew he him? Becauſe his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous."

And, as every worldly man's own conſcience is thus made troubleſome to him by the example of the children of God, ſo it tends to ſet ſinners at variance with one another, and expoſes the conduct of each to the cenſure of the reſt. Sin, however univerſally practiſed, is yet generally ſhameful. Conſcience though bribed, and comparatively blind in a man's own caſe, is often juſt and impartial, at leaſt under far leſs bias in the caſe of others. It is in this way, and in this way alone, that the public honour and credit of religion is preſerved, amidſt ſo great a majority who are enemies to it in their hearts. Muſt not then the example of a ſtrict and conſcientious perſon, ſet in the ſtrongeſt light the faults of thoſe who act a contrary part, ſo often as they happen to fall under obſervation together. Nay, does it not open the eyes of the world upon many leſſer blemiſhes which would otherwiſe eſcape its notice? The degree of ſhame that attends any practice, is always in proportion to the ſenſe which the

bulk of mankind have of the evil of it. And this ſenſe cannot by any means be more ſtrengthened, than by an example of what is good; as deformity never appears ſo ſhocking as when compared with perfect beauty. Thus a truly pious man is, by every inſtance of his viſible conduct, expoſing to reproach ſome one or other, and, by conſequence, provoking their reſentment.

It is for this reaſon that men diſcover ſuch a proneneſs to diſparage every profeſſion of piety ſuperior to their own. How common is it to aſcribe every ſuch appearance to weakneſs or hypocriſy. In the generality of wicked men this is not ſo properly malice as ſelf-defence. If they ſhould allow the excellence of ſuch a character, it would be condemning themſelves out of their own mouths. Their inward reflection, in all probability, is perfectly ſimilar to that of the Phariſees, when Chriſt aſked them whether the baptiſm of John was from heaven or of men? "They reaſoned with themſelves, ſaying, If we ſhall ſay from heaven, he will ſay unto us, Why did ye not then believe him?" In the ſame manner, ſhould any confeſs the excellence of a conduct oppoſite to their own, it would be impoſſible to avoid ſaying to them, Why do ye then ſo ſin againſt light?

Every one will ſee, that this muſt neceſſarily hold moſt ſtrongly in the caſe of thoſe whoſe office or whoſe work is of a public nature. They are like a city ſet on a hill. As their character is moſt conſpicuous, it is, by neceſſary conſequence, moſt uſeful to the good, and moſt provoking to the wicked. Faithful miniſters of Chriſt, for inſtance, are the

lights of the world, and, by their piety and diligence, are a standing reproach to the world lying in wickedneſs. But, in a particular manner, they muſt be the objects of the hatred and reſentment of thoſe of their own order, who will not follow their ſteps. This is an evident conſequence of the principle above laid down. As their character ſuffers moſt by the compariſon, their paſſions muſt neceſſarily be moſt inflamed. Let a miniſter of Chriſt be ever ſo guarded in his ſpeech, ever ſo inoffenſive in his carriage, ever ſo diſtant in reality from injuring others; if he is more frequent or more affectionate in preaching, if he is more aſſiduous in the duties of his function, this muſt naturally excite the reſentment of the lazy, ſlothful part of his profeſſion. This of itſelf is injury enough to thoſe who love their worldly eaſe, and have more pleaſure in the poſſeſſion of their benefice, than the exerciſe of their office. Is this ſurpriſing? Not in the leaſt. His conduct doc indeed moleſt their quiet; it either forces them to greater diligence, or holds up their real character to light, and expoſes them to contempt and ſcorn.

In order at once to confirm and illuſtrate this truth, be pleaſed, my brethren, to obſerve, that the force and malignity of envy in defaming of characters, is always in proportion to the nearneſs of the perſon to whom the character belongs. Diſtance, either of time or place, greatly abates, if not wholly extinguiſhes it. Suppoſe the character of a perſon drawn, who lived many ages ago, or even at preſent in a very diſtant country; ſuppoſe him repreſented as eminent in virtue of every kind, as re-

markably diligent, as indefatigably active in doing good; there are few who ſhew any diſpoſition to call in queſtion the fact, or impute it to ſiniſter motives. But let the ſame be the apparent character of any man among his cotemporaries, and how many are immediately up in arms againſt him! How implicitly do they believe, and with what pleaſure do they ſpread every idle calumny to his prejudice! How is his piety immediately converted into hypocriſy, his zeal into faction and ill nature, his fervour and diligence into affectation and love of popularity; and, in a word, every valuable quality into that vice by which it is moſt commonly or moſt artfully counterfeited.

That this difference of judgment is entirely owing to the reaſon I have aſſigned, will further appear if you conſider, that ſo ſoon as a connection of the ſame nature happens by any accidental circumſtance to be eſtabliſhed, the ſame invidious reſentment immediately takes place againſt the moſt diſtant characters. What inveterate prejudice do infidels generally ſhew againſt the characters of the Scripture ſaints, and thoſe of the fathers of the Chriſtian church, becauſe the eſtabliſhment of ſuch characters does neceſſarily and manifeſtly infer the overthrow of the cauſe in which they are embarked. In the mean time, the wiſe men of the heathen nations are ſuffered to poſſeſs, without contradiction, all the reputation which their countrymen in after ages have thought fit to beſtow upon them. Nay, ſometimes, to ſerve a certain purpoſe, their character is increaſed and magnified beyond all reaſonable bounds.—What pains have been taken by thoſe Chriſtians

who patronize the modern inventions and improvements in theology, to undermine the characters of the moſt eminent champions of the ancient faith! What would ſome perſons teach us to believe of Athanaſius and Auguſtine in earlier, Calvin, Luther and Melancthon in later times? Not that we have not well atteſted evidence of their piety and integrity, but that, being of different ſentiments from their accuſers, the excellence of their character is too good a ſupport to their cauſe *.

2. Another reaſon why the ſervants of God are repreſented as troubleſome is, becauſe they will not, and dare not comply with the ſinful commandments of men. In matters merely civil, good men are the moſt regular citizens and the moſt obedient ſubjects.

* I take the opportunity here to add, That the principle above laid down will plainly account for the great and unaſſaulted reputation which the monks and retired devotees ſo long enjoyed in popiſh times. It was their reputation, indeed, which upheld for ſo long a period that immenſe load of idolatrous ſuperſtition, the Romiſh religion and it was not loſt till they were groſsly corrupted, and convents were become receptacles of the moſt ſhameful impurity and luſt Theſe perſons were ſeparated from the world. No frequent, and few near compariſons could be made between them and others Nay, their character was voluntary, and peculiar to themſelves, containing no pretence of an obligation upon all others to imitate it, and therefore they were ſuffered to live unenvied. But if any perſons of piety towards God, and fidelity to their Maſter's cauſe, live in the world, and refuſe to be conformed to it, they muſt expect the ſame treatment that he met with. This he hath told them himſelf, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you," John xv. 18. "The ſervant is not greater than the Lord If they have perſecuted me, they will alſo perſecute you: if they have kept my ſaying, they will keep yours alſo," John xv. 20.

But, as they have a Maſter in heaven, no earthly power can conſtrain them to deny his name or deſert his cauſe. The reply of Peter and John to the Jewiſh rulers, when they were commanded "not to ſpeak at all or teach in the name of Jeſus," was in the following terms: "Whether it be right in the ſight of God, to hearken unto you more than unto God, judge ye," Acts iv. 19. With what invincible conſtancy and reſolution did Shadrach, Meſhach, and Abednego refuſe to bow before Nebuchadnezzar's golden image? The caſe of Daniel was perfectly ſimilar, whom even the king's commandment could not reſtrain from prayer to God.

When good men are unhappily brought into theſe circumſtances, their conduct is an apparent contradiction to authority. How ready are lordly and oppreſſive tyrants to ſtyle it obſtinacy and pride! And when are there wanting ſlaviſh and ſubmiſſive flatterers near every inferior tribunal to aggravate the crime, and to cry, "If thou let this man go, thou art not Ceſar's friend?" It is not to be imagined indeed, but ſuch as are ſtrangers to true religion muſt be greatly provoked at thoſe who will not comply implicitly with their commands. There is a remarkable paſſage in a letter of Pliny the younger to the emperor Trajan, which plainly points out the ſentiments entertained by many on this ſubject. He was a man in other matters abundantly humane, and yet hear his own account of his treatment of the Chriſtians when brought to his tribunal. "I aſked them if they were Chriſtians? if they confeſſed, I aſked them again, threatening puniſhment. If they perſiſted, I commanded them to be executed;

for I did not at all doubt but, whatever their confeſſion was, their ſtubbornneſs and inflexible obſtinacy ought to be puniſhed."

There is a love of dominion nntural to all men, which is under no controul or reſtraint in thoſe who are void of religion. This muſt naturally diſpoſe them to carry on their ſchemes, and to inſiſt on having them univerſally complied with. It frets and provokes them, therefore, to find any who will not be ſubſervient to their pleaſures. A refuſal to obey, on a principle of conſcience, is expreſsly ſetting bounds to their authority, and ſaying, Hitherto ſhalt thou go, but no further. How few are able to bear this with patience, the hiſtory of the world in every age is one continued proof.

Such refuſals, alſo, do always reflect ſome diſhonour upon the meaſures to which they ſtand in oppoſition. Whatever any perſon refuſes to do, he, as far as in him lies, repreſents as wrong and ſinful; and, in ſome reſpects, unworthy or unfit to be done. Thus it comes to be conſidered, not only as withdrawing his own allegiance, but as corrupting and ſeducing others. And no doubt it tends to draw the attention of the world to the diſputed command, and makes ſome, perhaps, ſift and examine what they had before blindly gone into without ſuſpicion.— Hence it naturally follows, that whenever ſuch interference happens between human and divine authority, good men muſt be conſidered as diſorderly and troubleſome; and thoſe of them of all others moſt troubleſome, who with the greateſt conſtancy adhere to their duty, or who with the greateſt ho-

neſty and boldneſs, reſiſt and oppoſe corrupt meaſures.

It is leſs ſurpriſing to find inſtances of this between heathen and Chriſtian, between the profeſſing ſervants and open enemies of the true God. But it is aſtoniſhing to think how often the ſame thing has happened between Chriſtian and Chriſtian, who ought to have been better acquainted with the rights of conſcience, the meaſures of ſubmiſſion, and the duty of forbearance. Not only all the perſecutions, but many, if not moſt of the ſchiſms and diviſions that have fallen out in the Chriſtian church, have ariſen from the rigorous impoſitions of uſurped authority. Unjuſt authority is the very eſſence of popery. The church of Rome has expreſsly claimed a power of making laws to bind the conſcience, diſtinct from the laws of God; and ſeverely puniſhes all who call this authority in queſtion. Nor hath this been confined to them. Proteſtant churches, though their ſeparation is founded upon the very contrary principle, have yet often in practice acted in the ſame arbitrary manner. They inſiſt upon obedience to all their appointments, however ſinful in the judgment of the ſubject; and, as a good man will not comply in ſuch caſes, how often doth it happen that, after they have expelled him from their ſociety, ſtript him of his office, and robbed him of his maintenance, they alſo caſt out his name as evil, loudly charge him as ſeditious and troubleſome, and the author of all that confuſion which their own tyranny occaſions.

3. One other reaſon why the ſervants of God are accuſed as troubleſome is, becauſe they are, in many

inſtances, obliged to bear teſtimony againſt the ſins of others, and openly to reprove them. Reproof is plainly, of all others, the greateſt offence and provocation of the proud, and draws down their heavieſt reſentment, and yet it is often unavoidable. There are ſome caſes in which every Chriſtian, without exception, muſt feel the conſtraint of this divine law: "Thou ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke thy neighbour, and not ſuffer ſin upon him," Lev. xix. 17. Some ſins are ſo flagrant in their nature, that even to witneſs them with ſilence, would imply ſome participation of the guilt. In ſuch caſes it is the glory of the pooreſt and meaneſt ſervant of God, to reſent the diſhonour that is done to his name, and reprove the moſt exalted ſinner.

But this duty, and the odium ariſing from it, falls moſt frequently to the ſhare of the prophets and miniſters of God, who have received a commiſſion to ſpeak in his name and to plead his cauſe. The faithful diſcharge of their duty includes in it plainneſs and boldneſs in reproving ſin of every kind. They muſt aſſert and maintain the truth, and point out the errors oppoſite to it, with all their guilty fruits, and all their dreadful conſequences. How offenſive this to human pride! It muſt certainly either convince or provoke, reform or inflame. When righteous Lot ſays, in the mildeſt terms, to the luſtful Sodomites, "I pray you, brethren, do not ſo wickedly," how fierce is the anſwer! "And they ſaid, Stand back. And they ſaid again, This one fellow came in to ſojourn, and he will needs be a judge," Gen. xix. 9.

How many martyrs to truth have there been ſince

the world began! Without mentioning thoſe in the Old Teſtament, you ſee John the Baptiſt loſt his life by reproving the inceſtuous adultery of Herod and Herodias. Our bleſſed Saviour gives the following account of the hatred of the world to him, and the contrary reception it gave to his temporiſing brethren, "The world cannot hate you; but me it hateth, becauſe I teſtify of it that the works thereof are evil." By conſulting the hiſtory of the goſpel you will find, that what gave riſe to the conſpiracy of the Scribes and Phariſees againſt him, was his dragging off the maſk under which they lay concealed, and diſcovering the errors of their doctrine and the licentiouſneſs of their practice. When they "perceived that he ſpake againſt them, they took counſel againſt him to put him to death;" and accompliſhed it ſo ſoon as they could do it with ſafety. But there cannot be a better example, or indeed a more lively and well drawn picture of the effect of plain and juſt reproof, than in the caſe of Stephen when pleading his cauſe before the Jewiſh rulers: "Ye ſtiff-necked, and uncircumciſed in heart and ears, ye do always reſiſt the Holy Ghoſt: as your fathers did, ſo do ye. Which of the prophets have not your fathers perſecuted? And they have ſlain them which ſhewed before of the coming of the juſt One; of whom you have been now the betrayers and murderers.—When they heard theſe things, they were cut to the heart, and they gnaſhed on him with their teeth," Acts vii. 51, 52. 54. It is plainly for this reaſon that the apoſtles, in their prayers for aſſiſtance, do almoſt conſtantly aſk that they may be endued with a proper degree of boldneſs and reſolu-

tion: "And now, Lord, behold their threatenings, and grant unto thy ſervants that with all boldneſs they may ſpeak thy word," Acts iv. 29. Many other prayers are to be found in the apoſtolic writings which run in the ſame ſtrain. See Eph. vii. 19. 2 Theſſ. iii. 2.

It is very natural for every one, at this diſtance, to imagine, that he could have been in no danger of making ſuch an obſtinate reſiſtance to the truth, or perſecuting, with ſuch implacable enmity, thoſe who eſpouſed it. But, my brethren, all worldly men, in every age, have ſtill the ſame abhorrence of the faithful ſervants of God; the ſame impatience of reproof when it touches themſelves. Our Saviour draws their character with great beauty, in ſpeaking to the Phariſees: "Woe unto you Scribes and Phariſees, hypocrites, becauſe ye build the tombs of the prophets, and garniſh the ſepulchres of the righteous, and ſay, If we had been in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets. Wherefore ye be witneſſes unto yourſelves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets," Matt. xxiii. 29, 30, 31. It is very delicately hinted in this laſt verſe, that they were of the ſame nature, that they grew, as it were, upon the ſame ſtock, and therefore it might be expected that they would bring forth the ſame fruit. I cannot but here mention a remark of a very eminent writer upon this paſſage, "That all nations partake much of this diſpoſition of the Jews, to honour the dead ſaints and perſecute the living*.

* Tillotſon.

I have taken notice above, that in every period of the church, the moſt faithful of the ſervants and miniſters of God have, in fact, been counted troubleſome by corrupt and worldly men. The ſame paſſages of hiſtory conſtantly ſhew, that this has ariſen chiefly from their attempts to ſtem the tide of prevailing vice; from their boldneſs and faithfulneſs in reproving faſhionable crimes. In the twelfth century, Arnulphus, a devout man and excellent preacher, ſpeaks thus to the clergy: "I know that you ſeek my life, and will ſhortly kill me: But why? I ſpeak the truth to you, I reprehend your pride and haughtineſs, avarice and luxury; therefore I pleaſe you not *." And in the fourteenth century, an ancient writer ſpeaks of the court of Rome in the following terms: "For what can you conceive will happen where virtue was long ago extinct and buried? There ſurely truth is the higheſt crime, and of itſelf ſufficient to procure the hatred of many. For how can we expect but that ſhould happen, where a true word cannot be ſpoken without a great reproach—where the worſt of men are promoted—where ſimplicity is eſteemed madneſs—where good men are rendered ridiculous, inſomuch that now ſcarce any of them doth appear but to be laughed at. Theſe few things truth itſelf hath dared to ſpeak, whence you may gather what you are to think of many others, which fear doth force me to conceal †." It is unneceſſary to cite many paſſages to this purpoſe; I ſhall therefore conclude this head with the following juſt reflection of the pious, dili-

* Whitby's App. to his book on Hoſt-worſhip.
† Petrarch's Ep.

gent, and catholic Mr Baxter: "I ſee there is no help for it, but we muſt offend wicked men. It is impoſſible to avoid it but either by our ſilence or their patience. Silent we cannot be, becauſe the word of God commands us to ſpeak; and patient they cannot be, becauſe ſin has the dominion in their hearts."

We now proceed, in the laſt place, to make ſome practical improvement of what has been ſaid. And,

In the firſt place, You may learn from what has been ſaid upon this ſubject, the juſt and proper anſwer to an objection againſt the goſpel, much inſiſted on by its enemies, viz. That it has introduced perſecution for conſcience ſake, with which the world was in a great meaſure unacquainted before. There are few ſubjects on which infidels enlarge with greater pleaſure, than the cruel hatred and animoſity that has prevailed, the bloody wars that have been carried on, nay, the ſavage and inhuman maſſacres that have been perpetrated on a religious account, ſince the publication of the goſpel. I think this objection is but ſeldom anſwered as it might be. It is uſually indeed, and juſtly obſerved, that whatever may have been done by thoſe profeſſing the goſpel, there is no countenance given in it to ſuch a ſpirit and practice. But the objection is not wholly removed while infidels are allowed ſtill to contend, as if it ſerved their own cauſe, that perſecution has been its conſtant attendant and inſeparable effect. We ought, therefore, to wreſt this argument out of their hands, and firſt to produce this fact as an accompliſhment of our Saviour's pre-

diction: "Think not that I am come to ſend peace on earth; I came not to ſend peace, but a ſword. For I am come to ſet a man at variance againſt his father, and the daughter againſt her mother, and the daughter-in-law againſt her mother-in-law. And a man's foes ſhall be they of his own houſehold," Matt. x. 34, 35, 36.

Having gone thus far, we have reaſon to contend that the diſciples of Chriſt have always ſuffered, and never inflicted the injury, though they have often been obliged to bear the blame. The multitude of heathen religions, though not always, yet did generally agree together: and well they might, for they were all from the ſame author. None of them, however, could agree with the goſpel, for this plain reaſon, that "no lie is of the truth." But from what quarter did the violence proceed? Did not the dreadful perſecutions againſt the Chriſtians, in the three firſt centuries, proceed from the heathens? Did the Chriſtians commit any other crime againſt them, than pointing out the ſin and danger of their idolatrous worſhip and immoral practices? Was not this alone ſufficient to raiſe a cry againſt them, as turning the world upſide down? And in all the ſubſequent perſecutions among profeſſing Chriſtians, was it any thing elſe than the proud, violent, and worldly ſpirit of thoſe who made a gain of godlineſs, oppreſſing the few real believers of every denomination? There is an antichriſtian ſpirit in every church that ſhews itſelf in perſecution, in a greater or leſſer degree. But there can be nothing more unjuſt, than to attribute the perſe-

cution of Chriſt's diſciples by his enemies and theirs to the ſpirit of his religion.

Is it then boldly affirmed by ſome, that the Chriſtian is the only religion in the world that leads to perſecution? I anſwer, on the contrary, It is the only religion that has ſuffered perſecution from all its numerous enemies; and, at the ſame time, it is the only religion in the world that requires, and points out the obligation of mutual forbearance, and makes the juſt and proper diviſion between the things that are Ceſar's and the things that are God's. That it is often blamed as perſecuting others, is a proof and illuſtration of this truth. For all is of a piece, and the falſe accuſation ariſes from the ſource which I have opened up above, and confirmed by examples produced from hiſtory. To theſe I ſhall now only add one obſervation, which comes in with peculiar propriety here, That innumerable inſtances may be given, in which thoſe very perſons who were ready to lift the ſecular arm againſt good men, have loudly complained of the exerciſe of diſcipline, and the cenſures of the church upon their crimes. Theſe they often ſtyle perſecution, and always affirm to flow from a perſecuting ſpirit. But as they are often neceſſary, ſo even when they are unjuſtly applied, it is plain from their very nature, that if they be groundleſs they muſt be perfectly harmleſs.

Thus the ſtate of the world is ſo far from being an objection againſt, that it is a proof of the truth of the goſpel. True Chriſtians have ſuffered from every quarter; from within and from without; from open enemies and from falſe brethren. They have

been firſt perſecuted, and then ſlandered as perſecuting others; nay, obliged to bear the odium of that very oppreſſion under which they groaned. Of all this they are fairly fore-warned by their Saviour, who ſays, "Behold I ſend you forth as ſheep in the midſt of wolves." They are expoſed to injurious treatment from many, and may expect to ſuffer without cauſe. None however make ſo cruel a havock as thoſe wolves who put on ſheep's clothing; and yet, of all their cruelty, the poor ſuffering ſheep muſt bear the blame.

2. From what hath been ſaid you may ſee the guilt and danger of thoſe who falſely accuſe the children of God. Perhaps you may be ready wholly to refuſe the charge, and to ſay, Where is the neceſſity, where is the propriety of this at preſent? Have we not all civil and religious liberty? and are not religion and its miniſters in eſteem and repute? I anſwer, It is never unneceſſary. The fault I complain of is no part of the peculiar degeneracy of this age. It is not confined to any one age, country, or profeſſion, but is common to them all; and we would but deceive ourſelves, ſhould we fondly fancy we are exempted from it. Nay, our preſent ſtate as a church and nation, ſeems to render ſuch a warning peculiarly ſeaſonable. We have long enjoyed outward peace. In every other country this has introduced a worldly ſpirit, ambition, luxury and ſloth. And is there no veſtige of theſe characters among us now? Who will pretend it? Are there not ſome who cannot endure ſuch ſtrictneſs as is inconſiſtent with conformity to the gay and faſhionable world? Do not all ſuch incline to charge every

profeſſion of piety with hypocriſy? Do they not conſider every faithful reprover as an enemy to their peace? Do they not hear with ſecret pleaſure, and ſpread with apparent triumph, every report to the prejudice of ſuch troublers of Iſrael?

This then is the character, and as many of you as conſcience charges with the guilt may ſee your danger. You may ſee whoſe cauſe you plead, and whoſe reward you ſhall ſhare. What inward enmity do you diſcover againſt the ſpirit and power of true religion? You are of the number of thoſe who "hate the light, and will not come to the light, leſt your deeds ſhould be reproved." You are of the number of thoſe who ſay "to the ſeers, See not, and to the prophets, Propheſy not unto us right things, ſpeak unto us ſmooth things, and propheſy deceit." You will not "endure ſound doctrine," but love and follow only that which will exerciſe and amuſe your imagination and fancy, ſooth and gratify your pride and vanity, or make and keep you at peace with yourſelves. You are aſleep in ſecurity, and will avoid every thing that may tend to diſturb or interrupt your dangerous repoſe. And how hurtful is your conduct to others! You blaſt the characters and leſſen the uſefulneſs of the miniſters of Chriſt. You bring an evil report upon the truth, by rendering them odious or contemptible who bear it. And if we, my brethren, who are miniſters of the goſpel, imitate this example in any meaſure; if we diſcover a ſuſpicion and jealouſy, or an averſion and hatred at all who are more diligent than ourſelves, what diſhonour muſt fall upon our profeſſion, what

a hindrance is it to the edification of others, and what guilt do we bring upon our own ſouls!

3. If this has been the conſtant lot of all the ſervants of God, to be accuſed as ſeditious and troubleſome, let every cautious perſon beware of being miſled by the perſecuting cry. I aſk any man who is converſant in the world, if he hath not, in many inſtances, been inſenſibly taught to form a hateful idea, or to entertain a deſpicable opinion of many miniſters, without the leaſt perſonal knowledge, the leaſt ſatisfying evidence or proof. What is the reaſon? Why, he hath been told, that they are proud, hypocritical, factious, cenſorious, troubleſome men. Well, the thing is poſſible, no doubt; but, in the mean time, it is far from being certain: and this ſort of character induſtriouſly propagated is no evidence of it at all, or rather is a preſumption of the contrary. You ſee, from the inſtances produced above, that this is a reproach perpetually thrown upon the moſt upright and faithful of the ſervants of God; that it may very naturally ariſe from their fidelity itſelf; and that it cannot be avoided by thoſe who reſiſt the corrupt meaſures, who reprove the public vices, or who ſhame the criminal lazineſs and negligence of others. An ignorant, vicious, worthleſs miniſter, is envied by nobody. He is therefore quite ſafe from all the poiſoned arrows which fly from that quarter. He is rather a foil to many, to ſet off and illuſtrate their own comparative excellence. He is therefore often pardoned, pitied, and protected. Whereas a faithful miniſter, who openly dares to bear witneſs againſt the apoſtaſy of others, is traduced and ſlandered, loaded with imaginary

crimes, and often falls a martyr to the ſinking cauſe of truth and righteouſneſs.

4. Since the world is ſo prone to receive the accuſation of faction againſt the children of God, let them be careful to give no real ground for it. Unjuſt calumny has ſometimes the contrary effect. When men find that it is impoſſible to pleaſe a capricious world, or wholly to eſcape ſlander, they are apt to give up all ſolicitude upon that head, and take no farther pains to avoid ſuſpected appearances. This I take to be preciſely what the Scripture calls being "overcome of evil." But how much better is it "to overcome evil with good!" Let us, as often as poſſible, confute the accuſation by an unblameable carriage; and when we muſt ſuffer, let us be careful that we ſuffer not as evil doers, but for well doing. For this purpoſe I would humbly offer to miniſters the two following directions, which I eſteem of great moment.

(1.) Let all our zeal for the glory of God be conducted, not only with ſteadineſs but with meekneſs. Let us ever remember, that the wrath of man worketh not the righteouſneſs of God. Let our language be always ſtrictly guarded, and free from expreſſions of rage and fury. If we are faithful to our duty, it will ſufficiently provoke ſinners, we need not add to it by any mixture of human paſſion. What noble and effectual principles are we furniſhed with in Scripture for avoiding every dangerous extreme! Love to God and love to man make up the ſum of practical religion. Theſe are the immediate fruits of faith, and all the truths of the goſpel tend to ſtrengthen and improve them. And as love to God

produces indignation againſt ſin, reſolution and boldneſs in oppoſing it, ſo love to man will naturally produce the deepeſt compaſſion for the miſerable ſtate of every enemy of God, and prevent firmneſs from degenerating into violence.

(2.) The other direction I would offer upon this ſubject is, that miniſters take care to avoid officiouſly intermeddling in civil matters. A miniſter ſhould be ſeparated and ſet apart for his own work; he ſhould be conſecrated to his office. It is little glory to him to be eminently ſkilled in any other ſcience, except ſuch as may be handmaids to theology, and are by him habitually turned into a divine channel. Miniſters giving themſelves to worldly employments have been commonly of bad fame; and where there is a ſufficient proviſion made for their maintenance, ſeems to be an unjuſt alienation of their time and talents. But it is ſtill more ſinful and dangerous for them to deſire or claim the direction of ſuch matters as fall within the province of the civil magiſtrate. When our bleſſed Saviour ſays, "My kingdom is not of this world," he plainly intimates to his diſciples, that they have no title to intermeddle with ſtate affairs. Nay, he expreſsly warns them againſt a lordly and arbitrary dominion, even in their own proper ſphere. "The kings of the Gentiles exerciſe lordſhip over them; and they that exerciſe authority upon them are called benefactors. But ye ſhall not be ſo; but he that is greateſt among you let him be as the younger; and he that is chief as he that doth ſerve," Luke xxii. 25, 26. I cannot help mentioning here, that this is one of the things for which our worthy anceſtors of

the church of Scotland (now deſpiſed by many) deſerve the higheſt commendation. It was an invariable principle with them to be againſt the civil power and places of kirkmen. And ſurely if miniſters confine themſelves entirely to their own proper duty, they will be much leſs liable to exception than otherwiſe. They may then warrantably uſe the greateſt fidelity in reproving, and the greateſt ſtrictneſs in diſcipline; and though the wicked ſlander and oppoſe them, the good will defend them, and God will ſupport them.

5 In the laſt place, Since the charge of faction and ſedition has been always brought againſt faithful miniſters, let us learn to bear it with patience, and never diſſemble the truth, or depart, in any meaſure, from our duty, in order to avoid it. A perſon of a generous mind feels a wound in his reputation more deeply than almoſt any other injury. We are ſtill apt fondly to flatter ourſelves, that as religion is truly amiable in itſelf, and ought to make no enemies, that therefore we ſhall have none. Some are very apt to omit, or ſlightly to perform ſeveral parts of their duty, through that "fear of man that bringeth a ſnare." They are unwilling to forego the hope, that by certain prudent compliances they will conciliate and preſerve the favour of every man and every party. But the expectation is wholly vain. The experience of many ages hath proved it ſo. Let us therefore bear with patience the falſe accuſation. It hath been the lot of the beſt and worthieſt men in every age. It was the lot of our bleſſed Maſter, and ſhall we refuſe to bear his croſs? Is it not "enough for the diſciple that he be as his

Maſter, and the ſervant that he be as his Lord?" The triumph of ſinners is but very ſhort. In a little time all earthly relations ſhall be diſſolved. Then high and low, magiſtrates and ſubjects, miniſters and people, ſhall ſtand before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt. He ſhall "render to every one according to his deeds." There the great and noble ſhall find no partial favour; there the poor and mean ſhall not eſcape obſervation; and there the lying ſlanderer ſhall be put to eternal ſilence. He ſhall openly acknowledge every faithful ſervant, and "bring forth his righteouſneſs as the light, and his judgment as the noon day."

THE CHARGE.

SIR,

AS you are now ordained a miniſter of Chriſt, and have received the charge of this congregation, I hope you will bear with me a little, while I offer you a few advices as to the diſcharge of your important truſt. And I cannot help beginning by congratulating you on the unanimous call you have received from this people. However deſpiſed by ſome, I count it a moſt happy circumſtance both for you and them. It introduces you with great advantage. It gives you a fair and impartial hearing; and if you do not preſerve their eſteem and love, it will probably be, in a great meaſure, owing to yourſelf.

I muſt firſt of all beſeech you, in the moſt earneſt manner, to be ſtrict and frequent in inquiring into the truth and reality of religion in your own ſoul.

Perſonal religion is the foundation of all relative duties. They can ſcarcely be performed in any tolerable meaſure without it. It is equally neceſſary to your uſefulneſs and to your comfort. It is a difficult thing, and it is a dreadful thing, to preach an unknown Saviour. Examine, therefore, whether you are "born again;" whether you have "paſſed from death to life;" whether you are united to Chriſt by faith; whether you know by experience the difference between a ſtate of nature and a ſtate of grace or not. While I ſpeak this, I aſſure you I do not mean it, and I hope none will interpret it as any reflection againſt, or implying any ſuſpicion of you, who have given me no cauſe. I ſpeak it from a deep impreſſion of its importance to us all. How miſerable a caſe is it to have it as our buſineſs to bring others to the kingdom of heaven, and be ourſelves at laſt thruſt out. A miniſter is as much liable to ſelf-deceit as any other, and in ſome reſpects more ſo. We are in danger of thinking ourſelves too eaſily ſafe, by comparing that outward regularity to which our office itſelf, even from ſecular motives, obliges us, with the licentious extravagance of profane ſinners. We may alſo miſtake our frequent thinking and ſpeaking of the things of God, in the way of our calling, for an evidence of true religion in ourſelves. Nay, we are in danger of miſtaking thoſe gifts with which God furniſheth us for the benefit of his own people, for the fruits of the Spirit, and gracious diſpoſitions in our own hearts. Maintain therefore a holy jealouſy over yourſelf. Give "diligence to make your calling and election ſure." And if you ſave your own ſoul,

you will probably carry many others with you to a better world, and be able to ſay, after the example of Chriſt, " Behold I, and the children whom God hath given me "

As to the duties of your office, ſee that you preach the pure and uncorrupted doctrine of Chriſt. Preach Chriſt crucified, who is " the way, and the truth, and the life ;" and without whom " no man can go unto the Father." You will never be able to make men truly good, till you convince them of their loſt ſtate by nature, and thence make them ſee the neceſſity of juſtification by the free grace of God, through the imputed righteouſneſs of Chriſt. If you would know what place Chriſt ought to hold in your preaching and ſcheme of doctrine, obſerve what room he fills in the oracles of truth. To the croſs of Chriſt give all the prophets witneſs. The croſs of Chriſt is the ſum and ſubſtance of the New Teſtament. The croſs of Chriſt is the Chriſtian's hope. The croſs of Chriſt is the Chriſtian's glory. You ſee, by a ſerious peruſal of the New Teſtament, that the ſacred writers largely illuſtrate the ſeveral parts of his character and office, and ſeem with pleaſure to embrace every opportunity of ſpeaking to his praiſe. They ſhew how much we are to depend upon him for ſtrength in the diſcharge of our duty ; and enforce all their exhortations by motives drawn from what he hath done, and is ſtill doing for his church and people. You will ſoon find from experience, that no cold reaſonings on the nature and beauty of virtue, can have ſuch influence in mortifying corrupt affections, as a believing view of a pierced Saviour. For this very reaſon many

deteſt the doctrine of the croſs. It gives a mortal blow to every darling luſt. It gives ſuch a view of the holineſs and juſtice of God, as is intolerable to all thoſe who cannot think of breaking their attachment to ſin and vanity.

There is one particular reaſon why I have mentioned this at preſent, and inſiſted on it at ſome length. It is ordinary to meet with ſerious perſons who complain much, that from many pulpits they hear little or nothing of the doctrine of the grace of God; that the grand and leading truths of the goſpel are either flatly contradicted or kept entirely out of view, and ſomething elſe ſubſtituted in their place. I am far from ſaying that this is indeed the caſe. On the contrary, I tremble to think that it ſhould be but barely poſſible; for all theſe doctrines are clearly contained in the Confeſſion of Faith, which every miniſter in Scotland has ſubſcribed. If, therefore, there be any one among us who doth not preach the doctrine of original ſin, of Chriſt's imputed righteouſneſs, juſtification by free grace, the neceſſity of regeneration, and the operations of the Spirit, he is guilty of perjury of the worſt kind, for which I know no excuſe. Such a perſon is not only chargeable with departing from the faith, but with an abſolute proſtitution of conſcience, and a whole life of hypocriſy and deceit. I am indeed entirely at a loſs how to account for this apprehenſion in the people, of a difference in doctrine; but as there certainly is ſuch an apprehenſion, I think I cannot diſcharge my duty on this occaſion, without exhorting you to be clear and explicit upon theſe heads. The

truth is, they are of ſo general conſequence, and have ſo neceſſary a connection with every other part of religion, that, be the ſubject what it will, where they are firmly believed, I ſhould imagine the manner of thinking and ſpeaking would be ſuch, as to leave no jealouſy of an intended omiſſion.

This leads me to exhort you to preach plainly, or in a way that may be level to the capacities of the hearers, both as to ſentiment and expreſſion. God forbid that I ſhould deſire you to ruſh into a pulpit without preparation, to preach in a diſorderly method, or in a mean, ſlovenly or indecent ſtyle. All pains ſhould be taken to ſeek out fit and "acceptable words." But there cannot be a greater abſurdity in ſpeaking to a multitude of common people, than to diſcourſe in ſuch a ſtiff and abſtract way, as it is plainly impoſſible for them to comprehend. Nor is it any leſs abſurdity to dreſs up an harangue with exceſſive elegance, and a vain, ornamented foppery of ſtyle. Some diſcourſes may very well be likened to painted windows, which, with fine colours upon themſelves, keep out the light, and make the houſe comfortleſs and dark. Such conduct is ordinarily followed by thoſe who would willingly recommend themſelves to perſons of better taſte; but it muſt evidently render them contemptible to every perſon of ſound judgment. However, it is much worſe than abſurd, for it is very wicked when the everlaſting ſalvation of ſinners is at ſtake, to ſpeak in ſuch a manner as they cannot underſtand, or ſuch as tends only to amuſe their fancy, and never can reach their hearts. If we would know what is a proper and juſt manner of ſtyle and compoſition

in preaching, let us conſider how any man would ſpeak if he was on trial for his own life. Would he not ſpeak with great plainneſs, earneſtneſs and force? and is not the ſalvation of ſouls of infinitely more moment than any man's life? and ſhould it not, if we believe the Scriptures, be more regarded by every faithful miniſter?

You muſt alſo take care to preach experimentally and particularly. You will ſoon find that this is the only profitable way of preaching, and that, unleſs you apply general truths to the ſeveral claſſes and characters in your audience, they will make but a ſorry improvement of the beſt inſtruction. The ignorant cannot, and the wiſer will not apply them to themſelves. Beſides, the general way is not only uſeleſs, but pernicious and hurtful. Suppoſe I ſhould make an encomium on the wiſe, juſt, and gracious government of God over his rational creation, and obſerve what reaſon all have to rejoice under his adminiſtration—ſhould I ſay ſo to this audience without diſtinction, it would be to many a dangerous and ſtupifying poiſon. A juſt and holy God is a conſuming fire to all the workers of iniquity. Thoſe who are ſtill in their ſins ſhould tremble to think of the government of God.

Beſides public preaching, you muſt be diligent among your people "from houſe to houſe." You muſt not neglect family inſtruction, and perſonal admonition or reproof. This is, if not the moſt uſeful part of a miniſter's work, at leaſt abſolutely neceſſary to the ſucceſs of his preaching. It is alſo by far the moſt laborious part, from which ſlothful men are moſt apt to excuſe themſelves. A man may

gratify his vanity by preaching and public performances, or, the neglect being visible, he may be compelled to regularity by fear of reproach or persecution. But diligence in private can scarcely arise from any thing but a sense of duty, and of the presence and observation of God.

The exercise of discipline is another part of your duty which must not be omitted. It is of very great moment to the interest of religion. It is a saying of one of the first reformers, "They that desire to banish discipline, desire to banish Christ from his church." There must needs be offences in the Christian church. But when discipline is neglected, then the offence becomes unspeakably more dangerous, especially to the young and weak. It makes them think lightly of the character and privileges of a Christian, when there is either a promiscuous admission to church communion, or when openly wicked persons are suffered to continue without censure. When you come to instruct young persons, in order to renewing their baptismal engagements in the Lord's supper; or if ever you have occasion to instruct a heathen in order to baptism, I can assure you, from experience, you will find the unhappy effect of the low state of discipline among us. It will immediately strike yourself, and these catechumens will soon betray, by their discourse, how hard it is to have a just sense of the sanctity of the Christian character, while so many profane persons are suffered to be called Christians; and not a few whose conduct is very exceptionable, continue to be admitted, at stated times, to the seals of God's covenant.

How inexcuseable are we in this neglect! If the

firſt Chriſtians, without the help or ſanction of an eſtabliſhment, kept ſo ſtrict a diſcipline, what might we do who have the countenance and approbation of the civil power. In diſcipline then be ſtrict, regular, and impartial. Eſpecially be impartial. It is commonly want of impartiality that makes us fail in ſtrictneſs. You will have many enemies to impartiality in diſcipline. You will have the great and wealthy, many of whom, though they live in open defiance of the laws and ordinances of Chriſt, yet will be much offended, and complain of it as a grievous injury, if by a judicial ſentence you deprive them of his name. Nay, you will find in every congregation ſome profeſſing piety, who, though they are well pleaſed with, and commend the ſtrict exerciſe of diſcipline in the caſe of others, yet when it comes to touch themſelves, or their own relations, will uſe many arts to evade it. But if you be firm and unbiaſſed in ſo good a cauſe, it will have a ſenſible effect.

This leads me to exhort you, in the whole of your work, public and private, to beware of the ſin of man pleaſing. I do not ſay, beware of popularity; becauſe, in the ſenſe to which common language hath confined that word, it is but one half of the ſnare. Beſides, in propriety of ſpeech, popularity ſhould ſignify only being accepted and beloved, which in itſelf is neither duty nor ſin, but a bleſſing. Man-pleaſing ſignifies, in Scripture, having this as the end and motive of our actions, rather than being acceptable to God. You ought indeed for edification, to avoid diſpleaſing any without neceſſity. But

as in this, ſo in every other thing, you ſhould have a far higher principle than merely courting the favour either of great or ſmall, good or bad. It is, doubtleſs, a mean and deſpicable principle, to act only with a view of gaining the applauſe of the vulgar and ignorant. But I have often wondered, how ſome ſhould ſo boldly and uncharitably lay this to the charge of their brethren, without conſidering how eaſy it is, with at leaſt equal juſtice, to preſume that they are under the influence of, and acting with a view to pleaſe the great. I am ſure there is a much ſtronger temptation to this than the former. And, if I am not miſtaken, fawning and ſervility hath been the road in which ambitious and corrupt churchmen have travelled to preferment in every age. The truth is, they are equally deteſtable in the ſight of God; but the laſt is much more deſtructive to the intereſt of religion than the firſt. The favour of the multitude can ſcarcely be obtained, without either the truth or the appearance of piety; but the favour of the great is often obtained by ſilence, and ſuffering them in their crimes, being aſſiſtant in their pleaſures, or ſubſervient to their political deſigns.

To deliver you, Sir, from both, remember the condition on which you hold your office. "Son of man, I have made thee a watchman to the houſe of Iſrael; therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me. When I ſay unto the wicked, Thou ſhalt ſurely die; and thou giveſt him not warning, nor ſpeakeſt to warn the wicked from his wicked way to ſave his life: the ſame wicked man ſhall die in his iniquity, but his blood will I

require at thine hand," Ezek. iii. 17, 18. Forget then the fooliſh accuſations of popularity or vanity; and conſider that your people are daily carried to their graves, and you muſt give an account of every ſoul that periſhes through your neglect.

To conclude, Be much in earneſt prayer to God that he would fit you for your work, and crown your labours with ſucceſs. Prayer is abſolutely neceſſary to the ſtedfaſtneſs and growth of every believer, and eſpecially to a miniſter. If you believe the goſpel, you will believe that "every good gift cometh from above;" that God only can make you an able and uſeful paſtor; and this will make you importunate with him for a plentiful meaſure of the Holy Spirit to fit you for his ſervice. And I deſire to join in praying that God, for Chriſt's ſake, would make you an "able miniſter of the New Teſtament," and help you to preach the goſpel, not with the wiſdom of "words," but with "the Holy Ghoſt ſent down from heaven."

EXHORTATION TO THE PEOPLE.

My Brethren,

YOU have heard the charge given to your miniſter. Are there, then, ſo many duties incumbent on him by his ſtanding in the relation of a paſtor to you? Is not the relation mutual? And are there not ſeveral correſpondent duties incumbent on you as his people? I beg your patience while I put you in mind of a few of the moſt important and neceſſary.

In the firſt place, It is evidently your duty diligently to attend upon his miniſtry. It is plainly impoſſible that you can profit by him if you do not hear him. I am ſorry that there are many in theſe days who pour contempt upon the ordinances of Chriſt's inſtitution. But, in particular, there hath been of late a great and remarkable deſertion of public worſhip by thoſe of higher rank. There is a happy opportunity in this caſe to put all ſuch among you in mind, that having ſubſcribed a call to their miniſter, they ſtand bound by conſent to attend upon him. Is it not ſurpriſing to think that any ſhould forget the terms in which that invitation runs? You intreat him "to take the charge of your ſouls, and promiſe him all due obedience and ſubmiſſion in the Lord." Can a man honeſtly ſubſcribe this, who ſeldom comes within the walls of any church? One would be counted infamous in the world, who ſhould act in the face of a ſigned obligation, in any other matter, or who even ſhould falſify a ſolemn promiſe. And is it leſs criminal becauſe it relates to religion and the ſervice of God? It is indeed ſeldom reſented or puniſhed by men, becauſe the offence is not immediately againſt them, but it remains to be puniſhed by that righteous God "to whom vengeance belongs—and who will not be mocked."

In the next place, my brethren, let me intreat you to be tender of the character of your miniſter, and of miniſters in general. As their office makes the guilt of their ſins great, and as a ſtain on their character is moſt hurtful to religion, on both accounts you ought not raſhly to receive an accuſation againſt

them. I do not mean to aſk indulgence to the unworthy, I give them up freely to that reproach and contempt which they juſtly deſerve. But let it fall upon the perſon, and not upon the office. Do not transfer the faults of particulars to the whole order. It is eaſy to obſerve the different reception which the faults or miſcarriages of miniſters meet with from perſons differently diſpoſed. The good are affected with grief and concern for the offence, or filled with zeal and indignation againſt the ſinner; but looſe and careleſs perſons diſparage the profeſſion, and bleſs themſelves in their own uniformity and conſiſtency of character. You may ſpare your reflections, "that miniſters are but men, miniſters are but like other men," and the like, when I aſſure you we deny it not. We have all the ſame great intereſt at ſtake. We often ſpeak the more earneſtly to you, leſt, while we preach the goſpel to others, we ourſelves ſhould be caſt-aways; and many times deſcribe the workings of a deceitful, wandering, ſlothful, worldly mind, by taking the copy from our own.

It falls very properly in my way on this occaſion, to take notice of a reproach thrown upon miniſters by the miſtake or perverſion of two of the queſtions uſually put at an ordination, and which you have juſt heard put to your miniſter. They are ſuppoſed by many to be ſuch as no man can anſwer with truth, and ſo quite improper to be put at all. The firſt of them is in the following terms: "Are not zeal for the honour of God, love to Jeſus Chriſt, and deſire of ſaving ſouls, your great motives and chief inducements to enter into the function of

the holy miniſtry, and not worldly deſigns and intereſts." This is maliciouſly interpreted to ſuppoſe, that a miniſter in accepting of a fixed charge hath no view or intention, primary or ſecondary, of being provided of a maintenance. This would be both unnatural and unreaſonable. "They that ſerve at the altar muſt live by the altar." The plain meaning is, That the great motives of a miniſter in conſecrating himſelf to this employment, and accepting the particular ſtation aſſigned him, ought to be the honour of God and intereſt of religion, as expreſſed above. And ſurely that this ſhould be the caſe hath nothing in it incredible in our country, the proviſion for the miniſtry not being ſo large but a man of tolerable abilities hath a much greater hazard of riſing to wealth and dignity in many other employments. But, alas, how ignorant are they who cavil at this queſtion? Do they not know that every Chriſtian is bound habitually and ſupremely to regard the glory of God in all his actions? This is not peculiar to miniſters, except ſo far as they ought to be exemplary in every thing. Wo to every man in this aſſembly, be his employment what it will, if he does not habitually point his whole actions to the glory of God. "Ye are not your own; ye are bought with a price; therefore glorify God with your bodies, and your ſpirits, which are God's," 1 Cor. vi. 19, 20.

The other queſtion is this, "Have you uſed any undue methods, by yourſelf or others, in procuring this call?" It is impoſſible to find fault with this queſtion, but by leaving out the word *undue*. And indeed it is ſo far from being wrong, that there

would be no harm if it were more particularly explained. It was probably intended to diſcourage all bribing and ſolicitation, other than a man's real character does for itſelf, or the free unbiaſſed judgment of others inclines them to do in his behalf. I apprehend it does reach a reproof to all thoſe who either promote or hinder ſettlements from political connections, or in expectation of temporal favours, and to thoſe who, by promiſes or threatenings, endeavour to influence their inferiors in ſuch a cauſe. In the mean time I dare ſay it will be allowed, that any thing of this kind done by a miniſter himſelf, or at his direction, in his own favour, would be very wrong; and, bleſſed be God, it is at preſent among us conſidered as highly indecent and criminal.

I muſt alſo put you in mind of the great duty of family inſtruction and government. Heads of families muſt prepare their children and ſervants for receiving benefit by public inſtruction, and endeavour by repetition to fix it in their minds. It is our duty to ſpeak plainly, no doubt; but it is impoſſible, preſerving the dignity of the pulpit, to ſpeak in ſuch a manner as to be underſtood by thoſe who have had no previous inſtruction in a familiar way. It is like caſting ſeed upon an unopened, unprepared ſoil, which takes no root, and brings forth no fruit. Is it not hard that, when many are ſo ready to find fault with every neglect of miniſters, and ſometimes expect more work from one than ten can perform, they ſhould take ſo little pains in their families, theſe ſmaller diſtricts, which are committed to their own charge?

To conclude all, Strive together with your mini-

ſter in your prayers to God for him. There is no way more effectual to prepare him for ſerving you in the goſpel, and there is no way more proper for preparing you to attend upon his miniſtry. If you make conſcience of this duty, you will come to receive the anſwer of your prayers, and indeed to hear the word of God. Alas, that there ſhould be ſo few of our hearers of this charitable, ſympathiſing kind. We have ſome ſtupid and inſenſible hearers, ſome proud and diſdainful hearers, many criticiſing and cenſuring hearers, but few praying hearers. Let all that fear God give themſelves to this duty. And let them not only remember that corner of God's vineyard in which their own lot is caſt, but the kingdom of Chriſt in general; and pray that his name may be great, "from the riſing of the ſun unto his going down." Amen.

SERMON XVIII.

PRAYER FOR NATIONAL PROSPERITY, AND FOR THE REVIVAL OF RELIGION, INSEPARABLY CONNECTED.

Preached on Thurſday, February 16. 1758, being the Day appointed in Scotland for a Public Faſt.

Isa. li. 9.

Awake, awake, put on ſtrength, O arm of the Lord: Awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art not thou it that hath cut Rahab and wounded the dragon?

My Brethren,

WE are this day called by our Sovereign to the duty of ſolemn faſting and humiliation, and to earneſt prayer for the bleſſing of God on his councils and arms. Religion and humanity conſpire in urging us to a hearty compliance, eſpecially while public affairs wear ſo threatening an aſpect. It ought alſo to awaken the attention, and increaſe the ſeriouſneſs of every particular worſhipping aſſembly,

that they are joining with ſo many others in intreating deliverance from theſe national calamities, in which all are equally concerned.

We have often, for ſome years paſt, profeſſed to humble ourſelves in the ſight of God, and have done it, alas! with a ſhameful coldneſs and indifference, or with an hypocriſy ſtill more criminal. But it is remarkable, that ſuch is the ſituation of affairs at preſent, as hath given an alarm even to ſome of the moſt inſenſible, and conſtrained them to conſider this duty as now ſomewhat more than a form. There has been, for ſome time paſt, ſuch a continuance and increaſe of public judgments, ſuch a ſeries of abortive projects, and broken diſconcerted ſchemes, as makes the moſt obſtinate and inconſiderate ſtand and pauſe, and ſeriouſly aſk, Is there not a cauſe?

Our ſetting apart this day, and applying ourſelves to the duty of faſting and prayer, implies a confeſſion of the power and providence of God.

It implies that we believe in him as the almighty Creator and righteous Governor of the world; the ſupreme Diſpoſer of every event, and ſovereign Arbiter of the fate of nations. How were it to be wiſhed that there was a juſt ſenſe of this truth on the minds of all of every rank! and that, in all who are in any meaſure ſincere on this occaſion, the impreſſion may not be tranſient and partial, but laſting and effectual! It ſhould excite us to a holy jealouſy over ourſelves, that we have ſo often eſſayed the like duty without any apparent ſucceſs. "Is there unrighteouſneſs with God? God forbid." The fault, doubtleſs, lies in ourſelves. Our faſts have

not been ſuch as God has choſen, and therefore he hath refuſed to hear our prayers.

In general, no doubt the evidence and the effect of an acceptable faſt, is repentance completed by reformation. Where this is wanting, we are juſtly liable to the charge brought by the prophet Iſaiah againſt the children of Iſrael, "Bring no more vain oblations, incenſe is an abomination unto me, the new moons and ſabbaths, the calling of aſſemblies I cannot away with, it is iniquity, even the ſolemn meeting. Your new moons, and your appointed feaſts my ſoul hateth, they are a trouble unto me, I am weary to bear them. And when ye ſpread forth your hands, I will hide mine eyes from you; yea, when ye make many prayers, I will not hear; your hands are full of blood," Iſa. i. 13, 14, 15. There is no queſtion but the unreſtrained flood of impiety which has overſpread this nation ſolicits divine vengeance, and prevents the efficacy even of the ſincere prayers that are offered up for deliverance and mercy. But as, with reſpect to particular perſons, every error or defect in practice is the conſequence of an erroneous or defective principle, as every vicious action proceeds from an impure heart, ſo, in a national capacity, I am perſuaded that our faſting and prayer has been fundamentally wrong, or eſſentially defective in itſelf, and therefore has been followed by little or no ſenſible fruit; or rather, that impiety which it ſhould have removed, it hath only contributed to increaſe.

For this reaſon my intention at this time is to point out to you what is the juſt and proper object of prayer for divine aid in a time of public calamity,

as well as the great encouragement to its exercise. For this there is a proper foundation in the passage of Scripture just read in your hearing. In the former part of the chapter the prophet had pronounced many gracious promises of inward and spiritual prosperity, and of outward protection and security to the church, though surrounded and threatened by enemies to her interests in both respects. He then changes the form of his discourse, personates believers, and in their name, as one of them, addresses to God the prayer in the text: "Awake, awake, put on strength, O arm of the Lord: awake as in the ancient days, in the generations of old. Art not thou it that hath cut Rahab and wounded the dragon?"

The beauty and strength of this language, the justness and force of the figures here used, it is almost impossible to overlook. The prophet prays for such a display of divine power and mercy as might be signal and sensible. "Awake, awake, put on strength," that is, exert thy power, discover thy glory in such a manner, as that thy present forbearance may be like the vigour of a waking man, compared to the defenceless and inactive state of one that is fast asleep. "O arm of the Lord!" This expression, the arm of the Lord, with the addition of making bare his holy arm, is frequently used in Scripture; and it is so strong, and at the same time so intelligible a figure, that it is impossible to amplify or explain, without weakening it. In the last part of the verse he animates his own faith, and enforces his request, by calling to remembrance past transactions, and former displays of the power and

grace of an unchangeable God. By Rahab and the dragon we are to underſtand Egypt and her king, as appears by comparing other paſſages of Scripture, particularly by Pſal. lxxxvi. 4. and Ezek. xxix. 3. the laſt of which runs thus: "Thus ſaith the Lord, Behold I am againſt thee, Pharaoh king of Egypt, the great dragon that lieth in the midſt of his rivers; which hath ſaid, My river is mine own, and I have made it for myſelf."

In diſcourſing on this ſubject, what I propoſe, through the aſſiſtance of divine grace, is,

I. To point out to you the import of this prayer in the firſt part of this paſſage, "Awake, awake, put on ſtrength, O arm of the Lord!"

II. To conſider the encouragement included in the laſt part of it, "Awake as in ancient days, in the generations of old: art not thou it that hath cut Rahab and wounded the dragon?"

III. To apply the ſubject to our preſent ſituation.

And we are to conſider,

I. The meaning and import of the prayer: "Awake, awake, put on ſtrength, O arm of the Lord." And in this I have no hope either of inſtructing or perſuading any but thoſe who have ſome meaſure of real religion, who do unfeignedly believe, and will, when called upon, recollect the conſtant ſuperintendency of divine providence. Theſe only will be ſenſible, that as every event is directed and over-ruled by the Almighty, ſo there are righteous, wiſe and gracious purpoſes to be ſerved by

them. All men, it is true, are ready to complain under diſtreſs. The moſt wicked and profligate, "when the waters are gone into their ſoul," when they feel their miſery, will cry for relief. And as they will turn them on every hand, and lay hold on every twig that may afford the leaſt proſpect of ſaving them from ſinking, ſo the terror of divine power, with which public calamity is ſometimes accompanied, will even make them cry unto God. But there is a great difference between this complaint of the miſerable, and the prayer of faith which proceeds upon juſt views of the nature and government of God, and is aſſured of ſucceſs. It may ſometimes pleaſe God to make uſe of deſolating judgments or alarming public ſtrokes to awaken a ſecure thoughtleſs generation; but dutiful, acceptable and ſucceſsful prayer for their removal, can only be the work of his own children.

Perhaps it may be thought unneceſſary to direct perſons of this character to the proper object of their prayers, as they muſt be ſuppoſed habitually to flow from right principles, and to point at juſt and warrantable ends. But it is certain that, when wickedneſs and profaneneſs greatly and univerſally prevail in any nation, the real ſervants of God are not only few in number, but even this little flock always receives ſome degree of infection. This we are taught to expect by our bleſſed Saviour, who ſays, "And becauſe iniquity ſhall abound, the love of many ſhall wax cold." They may both be negligent and defective in their duty, reſtraining prayer before God, and may be in a great meaſure unmindful of the great and principal views with which

they ought to offer up their interceſſory requeſts. But, hoping that all ſuch among you as are juſtly liable to this charge will diſcern the light, and feel the force of divine truth, it is my deſire to ſtir up your pure minds by way of remembrance.

And, in general, ſuch a petition as this, "Awake, awake, put on ſtrength, O arm of the Lord," ſuggeſts to us, that our prayers for divine interpoſition and deliverance from public calamities ſhould be ſupremely directed to the glory of God. This, as it is upon the whole the leading purpoſe of every real believer, ſo it ought to hallow every ſingle action, and purify every particular deſire. Therefore our prayers muſt be conceived in ſuch a manner, and our deſires after deliverance muſt be ſo qualified, that the ſupreme honour due to God may be preſerved inviolate, that duty may maintain its precedency before intereſt, and ſin may be ſtill more feared and avoided than ſuffering. The great end both of perſonal affliction and national correction is to weaken our attachment to preſent and temporal enjoyment, by ſtaining its glory, and convincing us of its vanity. If then our chief or only aim in aſking deliverance from outward calamity, is that we may again recover the eaſe and quiet of ſecurity, and the pleaſure of plenty, though we may ſeem to honour God by imploring his aid, yet is our homage really given to a ſenſual idol.

That this is neither impoſſible nor unfrequent, is plain from the hiſtory of the children of Iſrael. They often applied to God in their ſtraits: "When he ſlew them, then they ſought him, they returned and inquired early after God," Pſal. lxxviii. 34.

But this ſort of ſeeking, merely for preſent relief or temporal mercies, was far from being acceptable to him. We are told that it was tempting God thus "to aſk meat for their luſt," Pſal. lxxviii. 18. In oppoſition to this, let us look into the grounds aſſigned in Scripture for God's granting deliverance, and thence learn with what views we ought to implore it. The Pſalmiſt ſays, "Nevertheleſs he ſaved them for his name's ſake, that he might make his mighty power to be known," Pſal. cvi. 8. And the prophet Ezekiel, "But I wrought for my name's ſake, that it ſhould not be polluted before the heathen among whom they were, in whoſe ſight I made myſelf known to them, in bringing them forth out of the land of Egypt."

But in order to illuſtrate this a little further, obſerve, that a juſt regard to the glory of God in our prayers implies the two following things. In the firſt place, That we expect deliverance from God alone, deſire that it may be attended with ſuch circumſtances as his hand and power may be ſeen in it, and are willing to acknowledge him as the ſupreme and only Author of it. This is plainly included in the words of the prophet, "Awake, awake, put on ſtrength, O arm of the Lord." As if he had ſaid, In thee alone is our hope; "curſed be the man that maketh fleſh his arm." A profane irreligious people are always prone, in undertaking any enterpriſe, to put their truſt in human proweſs, to glory and boaſt in the greatneſs of their ſtrength. And when they are diſappointed in their expectations, they are ready to dwell ſo much upon ſecond cauſes, that they entirely overlook, or are with

great difficulty brought to acknowledge the ſupreme agency of God. We may, however, be ſenſible, by his taking to himſelf ſo often in Scripture the title of the Lord of hoſts, "great in might and ſtrong in battle," that ſuch conduct is robbing him of the glory that is juſtly his due. Many are the warnings we have in the word of God, not to place too much confidence in any human means of ſafety. "Put not your truſt in princes, (ſays the Pſalmiſt) nor in the ſon of man in whom there is no help," Pſal. cxlvi. 3. "There is no king ſaved by the multitude of an hoſt; a mighty man is not delivered by much ſtrength. An horſe is a vain thing for ſafety, neither can he deliver any by his great ſtrength," Pſal. xxxiii. 16, 17. And there is no Scripture truth more frequently or more ſenſibly confirmed in the courſe of providence. How often do we find, both in former and later ages, the events of war diametrically oppoſite to the greateſt human probability, and the moſt confident human expectation!

Now prayer for divine interpoſition ſhould always be made under a deep impreſſion of this truth. And indeed we ſhall never come to importunity and fervency in prayer for ſuch a mercy, till we are ſomewhat affected with it. All the honour that is given to man is taken from God. All truſt and dependance on human means as ſuch, or on their own account, divides and weakens our reliance on God. But when he is conſidered as the ſingle and only ſource of relief, we apply with that ardour and earneſtneſs which neceſſity and extremity ſuggeſt. This doth not hinder the diligent uſe and application of

outward means, but keeps them in their proper place, induces us to aſk the divine bleſſing upon them, and prevents us from provoking the divine jealouſy, by idolizing and truſting in them.

It ought alſo to be our deſire, that the glory of divine power may viſibly ſhine in our deliverance; not only that his hand may do it, but that his hand may be ſeen in it, and, if poſſible, to the conviction of all. Nothing is more impious, and nothing more provoking to God, than when men arrogate to themſelves the honour of what they have done by his help, or acquired by the bounty of his providence. Hear the language of the proud monarch of the eaſt: "Is not this great Babylon that I have built, for the houſe of the kingdom, by the might of my power, and for the honour of my majeſty?" Dan. iv. 30. But mark the unexpected change by the more powerful word of the King of kings. "When the word was in the king's mouth, there fell a voice from heaven, ſaying, O king Nebuchadnezzar, to thee it is ſpoken, The kingdom is departed from thee," Dan. iv. 31. How often in Scripture is the deſtruction and puniſhment of kings and princes aſſigned to their ſelf-ſufficiency, inſolence and pride? Thus in that remarkable prophecy againſt the king of Babylon: "For thou haſt ſaid in thine heart, I will aſcend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the ſtars of God: I will ſit alſo upon the mount of the congregation in the ſides of the north. I will aſcend above the heights of the clouds. I will be like the Moſt High. Yet thou ſhalt be brought down to hell, to the ſides of the pit. They that ſee thee ſhall narrowly look

upon thee, and conſider thee, ſaying, Is this the man that made the earth to tremble, that did ſhake kingdoms? that made the world as a wilderneſs, and deſtroyed the cities thereof? that opened not the houſe of his priſoners?" Iſa. xiv. 13. 17. How ſtrongly does this prove, that in order to pray acceptably for the interpoſition of divine providence, we ſhould be willing that God alone ſhould have the honour entire and undivided: "that the lofty looks of man ſhould be humbled, and the haughtineſs of man ſhould be bowed down, and the Lord alone exalted in that day," Iſa. ii. 11. Was it not thus that the ancient warriors of the holy nation fought and proſpered? In confidence of divine aid, or reſigned to the divine will, they went out and played the men for their people and the cities of their God. And when they had done ſo, they acknowledged that his right hand and his holy arm had gotten HIM the victory. See the ſong of Moſes on his victory over the Egyptians: "Thy right hand, O Lord, is become glorious in power: Thy right hand, O Lord, has daſhed in pieces the enemy. And in the greatneſs of thine excellency thou haſt overthrown them that roſe up againſt thee: Thou ſenteſt forth thy wrath, which conſumed them as ſtubble," Exod. xv. 6, 7.

I cannot conclude this branch of the ſubject without obſerving that we have had, in the courſe of Providence, a very recent inſtance, both of a ſingular appearance of the hand of God in defence of a righteous cauſe, and a modeſt aſcription of it to the power of the Higheſt. That prince who appears now to be the chief outward ſupport of the Pro-

teſtant cauſe in Europe, has been enabled literally, according to the ancient promiſe, "with five to chaſe a hundred, and with a hundred to put ten thouſand to flight." The greateſt earthly potentates had combined againſt him, and conſpired his ruin. Aſſured of victory, they were forging chains for his followers, and dividing his inheritance by lot. But in the name of the Lord he ſet up his ſtandard The Lord turned the counſels of his enemies into confuſion. His victories have been numerous, extraordinary and important. And he hath all along avoided boaſting and vain-glory, and piouſly acknowledged that "ſalvation belongeth unto God."

In the ſecond place, In applying to God for an extraordinary interpoſition of his providence, we ought alſo to pray for a diſpenſation of his grace and mercy. When we pray that the arm of the Lord may awake and put on ſtrength, it ſhould be that a revival of religion may accompany temporal relief, and that by a plentiful effuſion of the Holy Spirit many ſinners may be delivered from the worſt of bondage, and brought to the glorious liberty of the children of God. As this ſhould be in itſelf the object of our deſire, ſo it ſhould be inſeparably joined with the other, and their mutual connection ſtill kept in view. Temporal mercies to a nation, as well as to particular perſons, ought always to be made ſubſervient to the promoting of truth and righteouſneſs. It is remarkable that theſe two things are always joined in Scripture. And, indeed, if temporal mercies be conſidered in the light I formerly mentioned, it is impoſſible that they can be put aſunder. Let any one conſult the interceſſory prayers

in which deliverance from external calamity is intreated, the prophecies in which it is promiſed, or the ſongs of praiſe in which it is celebrated, and he will find that the purity and ſpiritual proſperity of God's heritage is ſtill kept in view. They are conſidered as involved in one another, and the one as only valuable becauſe leading to the other. Inſtead of enumerating many paſſages, I ſhall only mention one of the prophet Iſaiah: "And I will turn mine hand upon thee, and purely purge away all thy droſs, and take away all thy tin. And I will reſtore thy judges as at the firſt, and thy counſellors as at the beginning: afterward thou ſhalt be called the city of righteouſneſs, the faithful city. Sion ſhall be redeemed with judgment, and her converts with righteouſneſs."

And, my brethren, is not the arm of the Lord and the glory of his power particularly diſplayed, when the influence and dominion of error is deſtroyed and the obſtinacy and rebellion of ſinners is ſubdued? This is a more extraordinary, as well as a more excellent effect of power, than producing the greateſt changes in our outward ſtate and condition. It ſeems to be on this account that in Scripture the Saviour of ſinners, the King of Sion, is ſo often repreſented as glorious in his perſon, and great in his power: "For unto us a child is born, unto us a ſon is given, and the government ſhall be upon his ſhoulder, and his name ſhall be called Wonderful, Counſellor, the mighty God, the everlaſting Father, the Prince of peace," Iſa. ix. 6. "Gird thy ſword upon thy thigh, O Moſt Mighty, with thy glory

and thy majeſty. And in thy majeſty ride proſperouſly, becauſe of truth, and meekneſs, and righteouſneſs; and thy right hand ſhall teach thee terrible things," Pſal. xlv. 3, 4. Theſe, and a multitude of other paſſages, plainly ſhew that the converſion of ſinners, and defeating the powers of the prince of darkneſs, require an exertion, and is a ſignal diſplay of the ſtrength of the divine arms.

But as it is a matter of the utmoſt importance and propriety at preſent, I muſt beg your patience while I endeavour a little to illuſtrate the neceſſity of joining earneſt interceſſion for the revival of religion and the glory of Chriſt's kingdom, with our prayers for a recovery of national proſperity.

For illuſtrating this, let us attend to the three following particulars.

1. We have no warrant to aſk the laſt of theſe without the firſt.

2. We have no reaſon to expect that it will be ſeparately beſtowed.

3. If it ſhould, in any degree, it would not be a bleſſing but a curſe.

Firſt, We have no warrant to aſk national proſperity without a revival of religion. Our prayers are then only warrantable when we adjuſt and proportion our eſteem of the mercies of God to their real worth, and deſire them for their proper ends. Now a love to one's country, and a deſire of its outward welfare, is, no doubt, an excellent and an amiable diſpoſition. But it is much more ſo to be concerned for their everlaſting intereſt. Why doth the love of our country merit any praiſe, but becauſe it is a diſpoſition and tendency to communicate hap-

pineſs? But what is temporal to eternal happineſs? What is a fruitful field to a renewed heart? peace at home to peace with God? ſecurity from an earthly oppreſſor to deliverance from the wrath to come? A compaſſionate heart bleeds for the miſery of his fellow-creatures in poverty or bondage; but a ſanctified heart is ſtill more deeply affected with the ignorance and guilt of others, and their endleſs conſequences. Now is it a warrantable manner of offering up our deſires to God, to admire or aſk a ſhare in the bounty of his providence, while we deſpiſe and trample upon the riches of his grace?

But that ſuch prayers are unwarrantable, doth not only appear from the unjuſt preference given to leſſer before greater mercies, but from their being a total perverſion of our deſires from the great point in which they ought to centre. The gifts of God are intended to lead us to the Giver; the events of his providence to be ſubſervient to the methods of his grace. When, therefore, we aſk temporal proſperity, without an equal, or rather ſuperior ſolicitude for the enlightening and ſanctifying influences of the Holy Ghoſt, we are alienating his mercies from their proper uſe, turning them into weapons of rebellion againſt him, and cheriſhing that love of the world which is deſtructive of the love of God.

Secondly, As all ſuch deſires are unwarrantable and diſorderly, ſo we have no reaſon to expect that they ſhall be granted. Let us recall to mind this important truth, that God is the ſupreme Diſpoſer of all events. Every proſperous event is the effect of his bounty. Every calamity is the rod of his

anger, and carries his commiſſion. Are there not, then, wiſe ends to be ſerved by every thing appointed by him? Affliction ſpringeth not out of the duſt. National calamity is not the rigour of an arbitrary tyrant, but the wiſe chaſtiſement of a gracious Father, or the puniſhment of a righteous Judge. He ruleth the nations "ſitting upon the throne of his holineſs;" and unleſs when he hath a mind to "make a full end" of a people ripe for deſtruction, gives them for a ſeaſon into the hands of their enemies to bring about their reformation. If, then, public calamity bears a commiſſion for this purpoſe from him whoſe work is perfect, what reaſon is there to expect that it will be removed before it hath attained its end? Will he not repeat the ſtroke, and increaſe its ſeverity, till it procure ſubmiſſion? It is true, we cannot preciſely ſay how far the forbearance of God may go, or how long his patience may endure. There may be a remiſſion or ſuſpenſion of the final ſtroke for their farther trial. But it is certain that when there is no returning to God by repentance, there can be no reaſonable ground to hope that his diſpleaſure will ceaſe, or its effects be removed.

Thirdly, Though temporal deliverance were granted to a nation, in any meaſure, without a diſpenſation of the Spirit and revival of religion, it would be no bleſſing but a curſe, and could not be of any long duration. It would be giving them up to themſelves, to fill up the meaſure of their iniquities, that, when the appointed time of vengeance ſhould come, their deſtruction might be more terrible and ſignal. It is remarkable that this is found among the judg-

ments of God, and reckoned one of the moſt dreadful, when he ceaſes to ſtrive with a people, and gives them up to themſelves. Thus he ſays by the Pſalmiſt, "But my people would not hearken to my voice, Iſrael would have none of me; ſo I gave them up to their own hearts luſts, and they walked in their own counſels," Pſal. lxxxi. 11, 12. So alſo ſaith the prophet Hoſea, "Ephraim is joined to idols, let him alone," Hoſ. iv. 17. The conſequence of this is the continuance and increaſe of all manner of wickedneſs. Then ſpiritual judgments come in the room of temporal, which, though they are leſs ſenſible, are but ſo much the more fatal. Blindneſs of mind, hardneſs of heart, and an obſtinate contempt of inſtruction, are the uſual conſequences of unſanctified proſperity. In ſuch circumſtances a nation may exult, and bleſs themſelves in their abundant wealth; nay, they may be the envy of their fooliſh and ſhort-ſighted neighbours, but to the eye of faith their condition is moſt wretched and deplorable. To what a pitch of impiety they may proceed when all reſtraints are withdrawn, ſome nations recorded in hiſtory are a ſtanding and melancholy proof. And the ſudden deſolation ſometimes inflicted, after long forbearance, by the Lord of nature, on cities and kingdoms, by fire from heaven, by earthquakes, peſtilence, or the ſword, is a fearful preſage of the fate of all who in the day of recompence ſhall ſuffer the vengeance of eternal fire.

All theſe things are plainly founded on the word of God, and manifeſt conſequences of the divine government. They will, however, make very little

impreſſion on a thoughtleſs and ſecure generation, plunged in ſenſuality and luſt; and leaſt of all on thoſe who have expreſsly liſted themſelves under the banner of infidelity, and learned to be profane upon principle. This is one of the worſt ſymptoms of our preſent condition; the greater our guilt, and therefore the nearer the danger. Nothing was leſs looked for by the Babylonian monarch, in the height of his riotous midnight feaſt, than his kingdom's being taken from him. And yet how ſpeedily was it accompliſhed, and in how ſhort a time was this ſuperb and opulent city, the "beauty of the Chaldees excellency," turned into a ruinous heap! See Iſa. xiii. 21. to the end.

I proceed now to the ſecond general head, which was,

II. To conſider a little the encouragement to prayer, contained in the laſt part of the text: "Awake as in the ancient days, as in the generations of old," &c.

In this the prophet animates his faith, and encourages his own dependence, and that of others, upon the promiſes of God, by celebrating the greatneſs of his power, as manifeſted in former memorable deliverances granted to his choſen people. He continues his addreſs to the arm of the Lord; and inſtead of an enumeration of the mighty acts of this arm in ancient days, and the generations of old, he fixes upon one ſignal and leading diſplay of divine majeſty and power, in the deſtruction of the Egyptians, and the deliverance of Iſrael from that ſubjection and bondage in which they were formerly held by that people. This is done with the higheſt pro-

priety; for the deliverance of Iſrael from Egyptian bondage was moſt remarkable and extraordinary in its circumſtances, and the hand of God did moſt eminently appear in it. Thus the prophet ſays, in the verſe immediately following the text, "Art not thou it which hath dried the ſea, the waters of the great deep, that hath made the deeps of the ſea a way for the ranſomed to paſs over?" From this appearance in behalf of Iſrael, God often takes his deſignation. This chiefly conſtituted the ſpecial relation between him and the people of Iſrael, and on this their obligation to obedience is founded, in the preface or introduction to the moral law: "I am the Lord thy God, which brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the houſe of bondage." And indeed this deliverance is often conſidered, and juſtly, as typical of the ſtill more important deliverance of the elect of God from ſin and miſery.

Now let us conſider a little the effect of ſuch a view upon the mind, and its influence in prayer. This, I think, may be included in the two following particulars:

Firſt, It ſatisfies us of the power of God, and his ability to ſave. There can be no prayer addreſſed to God for relief and deliverance in an acceptable manner, but what proceeds upon a confidence in his power. And there is in men, for the moſt part, on this ſubject, a very imperfect and wavering perſuaſion. Nay, there is often a greater degree of unbelief than they themſelves are ſenſible of, or diſtinctly apprehend. They are often ſo held captive by ſenſe, and their attention ſo much taken up and engroſſed by outward means and inſtruments, that they

are backward to believe or rely even on an almighty, becauſe an inviſible power. This was the caſe often with the children of Iſrael, even after repeated proofs of the ſtrength of the divine arm. Thus ſays the Pſalmiſt: "How oft did they provoke him in the wilderneſs, and grieve him in the deſert? Yea, they turned back and tempted God, and limited the holy One of Iſrael. They remembered not his hand, nor the day when he delivered them from the enemy," Pſal. lxxviii. 40, 41, 42. Againſt this unhappy tendency, God, by the prophet, warns his people, a few verſes after the text: "I, even I, am he that comforteth you; who art thou that thou ſhouldſt be afraid of a man that ſhall die, and of the ſon of man which ſhall be made as graſs? and forgetteſt the Lord thy Maker, that hath ſtretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth? and haſt feared continually every day, becauſe of the fury of the oppreſſor, as if he were ready to deſtroy; and where is the fury of the oppreſſor?" Iſa. li. 12, 13. And indeed nothing can be more ſupporting under ſuch fears, than to remember the inſtances in which God hath formerly made his power known. It is, as it were, realizing the divine perfections, and making us to ſee him who is inviſible. In this very way does the Pſalmiſt recover from a diſconſolate ſtate, and dark diſcouraging views of divine providence. "Hath God forgotten to be gracious? hath he in anger ſhut up his tender mercies? Selah. And I ſaid, This is my infirmity, but I will remember the years of the right hand of the Moſt High. I will remember the works of the Lord; ſurely I will remember thy wonders of old,

I will meditate alſo of all thy works, and talk of thy doings," Pſal. lxxvii. 9,—12.

In the ſecond place, The ſame view ſerves to aſcertain us of the mercy of God, and his readineſs to help us in diſtreſs. It is not enough that we have ever ſo unſhaken a perſuaſion of the power of God, unleſs we have ſome ground to believe that it ſhall appear in our behalf. Now former inſtances of extraordinary providential deliverance not only afford a proof of divine power, but ſhew us in what caſes we have reaſon to expect that it ſhall be exerted. That part of the providence of God which is already open to our view, enables us, from analogy, to infer what ſhall be his ſubſequent conduct; at leaſt ſo far as to direct and encourage us in our own duty. We know, for example, that he is a refuge in times of trouble to thoſe that are in diſtreſs; and that in extremity, when all human help fails, then is deliverance more to the glory of God. By this very argument does Jehoſhaphat conclude and enforce his prayer. "O our God, wilt thou not judge them? for we have no might againſt this great company that cometh againſt us; neither know we what to do, but our eyes are upon thee," 2 Chron. xx. 12.

We know alſo that his faithfulneſs is engaged to hear thoſe, who, refuſing to lean on any broken reed, or truſting any refuge of lies, place their confidence in him alone; and that the glory of God is immediately and chiefly concerned in the ſupport and preſervation of his own people. They ſee that he hath, in all ages, counted this his own cauſe; and therefore they ſay with the Pſalmiſt, "They that know thy name will put their truſt in thee, for

thou, Lord, haſt not forſaken them that ſeek thee," Pſal. ix. 10. In fine, former inſtances of extraordinary deliverance point out the great end and deſign of ſuch interpoſitions. That they are for promoting of truth and righteouſneſs, and to make thoſe who are the objects of them cheerful and willing ſervants to God; not only partakers of the bounty of his providence, but monuments of the riches of his grace. "In that day ſhall this ſong be ſung in the land of Judah. We have a ſtrong city, ſalvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that the righteous nation that keepeth the truth may enter in," Iſa. xxvi. 1, 2. "Violence ſhall no more be heard in thy land, waſting and deſtruction within thy borders; but thou ſhalt call thy walls ſalvation, and thy gates praiſe," Iſa. lx. 18. From all which it appears, that in prayer properly warranted, and rightly directed, it muſt give unſpeakable confidence and hope to ſurvey the remarkable inſtances of divine providence, and thence take encouragement to commit our cauſe to, and reſt our hope on the ſame unchangeable God.

I conclude this head with obſerving, That in the expreſſion of the prophet, "Art thou not it that hath cut Rahab and wounded the dragon," he hath a particular view to the eternity and immutability of God. "He is the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and forever." If he hath done great and marvellous things in the moſt diſtant ages, "his hand is not ſhortened that it cannot ſave, neither his ear heavy that it cannot hear;" his ſtrength is not impaired by exerciſe, nor his fulneſs waſted by communication. Such an argument would not hold with re-

gard to man, whoſe power is ſo exceeding mutable, and his ſtrength ſo exceeding liable to decay. It is recorded in hiſtory, that an old Roman, Milo, who in his youth was a prodigy of ſtrength, happened to live to old age, and that he uſed often to weep when he looked on his arms, his once nervous and vigorous arms, and ſaw the wrinkled and decayed ſinews, and the weak, feeble ſtate to which they were reduced by time. But this is not, cannot be the caſe with the arm of the Lord. His ſtrength and ſtability, particularly as oppoſed to created weakneſs and frailty, is often declared in Scripture. Thus in the following ſublime paſſage of the prophet Iſaiah: "And the voice ſaid, Cry. And he ſaid, What ſhall I cry? All fleſh is graſs, and all the goodlineſs thereof is as the flower of the field. The graſs withereth, the flower fadeth, becauſe the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it; ſurely the people is graſs. The graſs withereth, the flower fadeth; but the word of our God ſhall ſtand forever," Iſa. xl. 6.

I proceed now, in the laſt place, to apply the truths you have heard on this ſubject to our own preſent ſituation as to public affairs.

And, firſt, Is not our ſtate, both as a nation and as a church, exceedingly fallen and low? and have we not the greateſt need to addreſs this prayer in the text, "Awake, awake, put on ſtrength, O arm of the Lord?" May we not take our low and fallen ſtate as a nation from the univerſal confeſſion of all without exception, however oppoſed in ſentiments or intereſt! Every claſs and denomination of men among us, every party and faction, however unwilling each may be to acknowledge its own ſhare of the

guilt, and however prone to load its adverſaries with the blame of procuring it, is yet willing to acknowledge that we are at preſent in a diſtreſſed, and in a contemptible ſtate.

And indeed the thing itſelf ſpeaks. We have of late ſuffered under a variety of public ſtrokes. We have not only had, for ſome time paſt, repeated threatenings of ſcarcity and dearth, but vaſt multitudes have been afflicted with famine in its rigour, which is one of God's "ſore judgments." Through the mercy of God this is alleviated in ſome meaſure at preſent, but far from being entirely removed. We have alſo been long engaged in war with a powerful and politic enemy. And has not the providence of God ſenſibly frowned on us, and viſibly fruſtrated almoſt every one of our attempts? This hath been the caſe to a degree hardly known in any former inſtance. We have "turned our backs faint-hearted before our enemies," in almoſt every encounter; and the greater and more formidable our preparations for any enterprize, the more pitiful the iſſue, and the more ſhameful our defeat and diſappointment. Has there not been an obſtructed trade, a loſs of territory, a loſs of honour, and expence of treaſure? Is not this nation, once in a manner the arbitreſs of the fate of Europe, now become the ſcorn and deriſion of her neighbours and all that are round about her? What weak and divided councils among t' oſe that preſide! Inſtead of any genuine public ſpirit, a proud and factious endeavour to diſgrace each other's meaſures, and wreſt the enſigns of government out of each other's hands. How numerous and expenſive, but how uſeleſs and inactive,

have been our fleets and armies! And how deplorable is the condition of our colonies abroad! They are the chief theatre of the war, becauſe indeed they are the ſubject of the conteſt. And ſurely it is affecting to think of the unnatural barbarity and cruelty that there is often exerciſed, when no age or ſex is ſpared. It is true, the diſtance of the place may probably make us leſs ſenſible of their miſery. But if it pleaſe God to ſuffer our enemies to continue their progreſs, it is hard to ſay how far the deſolation may extend, or how univerſal it may prove.

Are we not alſo in a very low and fallen ſtate as a church or a nation, ſtill retaining ſome profeſſion and form of religion? This will be found to correſpond with the other, as the cauſe with the effect. How have all ranks, from the higheſt to the loweſt, corrupted their ways! How groſs and prevalent is infidelity, undermining the principles of natural, with the ſame zeal and eagerneſs with which it formerly endeavoured to weaken the foundations of revealed religion! How many of high rank have wholly deſerted the houſe and worſhip of God, nay, openly and boldly treat his ſervice and ſervants with contempt? How often do we obſerve ſuch, with a criminal and inſolent ſelf-contradiction, trample upon the very laws againſt profaneneſs which they contribute to make! And with how much zeal and diligence does the lower part of the nation emulate the higher, in that which is the reproach of both! So great is the prevalence of irreligion, contempt of God, ſenſuality and pride, that many of the groſſeſt

crimes are not only practiſed but profeſſed, not only frequent but open, not only perſiſted in but gloried in and boaſted of; inſomuch, that it requires no ſmall degree of fortitude and reſolution ſtedfaſtly to adhere to the principles and character of a diſciple of Chriſt, in oppoſition to the ſpirit and ſtrain of faſhionable converſation.

It is not indeed to be wondered at, that not only this nation, but the Proteſtant ſtates of Europe in general, ſhould be brought under the rod, as they have ſo ſhamefully departed from that purity of faith and ſtrictneſs of morals which was the glory of the Reformation. How many have of late been aſhamed of the croſs of Chriſt, and the doctrine of the grace of God! And what hath been ſubſtituted in their room? A pliant and faſhionable ſcheme of religion, a fine theory of virtue and morality; a beautiful but unſubſtantial idol, raiſed by human pride, adorned and dreſſed by human art, and ſupported by the wiſdom of words. And hath it not in this, as in every preceding age, in this, as in every other Chriſtian country, whenever it gained any credit, been the fore-runner, and brought faſt at its heels a deluge of profaneneſs and immorality in practice? Can any of theſe things be called in queſtion? And are not they, as well as many more which might eaſily be enumerated, the melancholy proofs of our degenerate and corrupt character?

In the ſecond place, From what hath been ſaid you may ſee what wrong meaſures we have hitherto taken for removing theſe evils, ſo far as we have been ſenſible of them. Our gracious Sovereign hath indeed been pleaſed to point out our duty, by calling

us annually to faſting and humiliation. But with the far greater number it hath been no more than an unmeaning and lifeleſs form; and they have continued ſtill in the ſame forgetfulneſs and contempt of God. You have heard above, that nothing is more contrary to the genuine ſpirit of interceſſory prayer in public calamity, than putting truſt in an arm of fleſh. And yet, is there any thing with which this nation is at preſent more juſtly chargeable? Nothing is more apparent from the very face of our common channels of intelligence. In the caſe of diſappointments, on the one hand, are we not ungovernable and headſtrong in our reſentment againſt men? and equally fooliſh and ſanguine on the other, in our hopes of thoſe who are ſubſtituted in their place? We give pompous details of armaments, and propheſy, nay, even in a manner deſcribe their victories long before the ſeaſon of action, and incautiouſly celebrate the characters of leaders while they are only putting on the harneſs, and going into the field. What proud and arrogant ſentiments do we often expreſs on the ſubject of our national courage and ancient Britiſh fire as it is called! In ſhort, we ſeem to have got entirely into that vain-glorious, oſtentatious ſyſtem, with which we uſed to upbraid our neighbour and rival nation; and they ſeem to have given it up in our favour, and to have adopted the wiſer and more profitable method of putting deeds for words.

And how negligent have we been of promoting or praying for the intereſt of religion! You have heard, that when the arm of the Lord puts on ſtrength, it muſt be to appoint ſalvation for walls

and bulwarks to a people. But how few diſcover any concern upon this ſubject! The want of public ſpirit in thoſe who retain any ſenſe of religion, is an evidence of its low and languiſhing ſtate. When it is lively, it will always be communicative. Love to God and love to man, the two great branches of practical religion, neceſſarily imply a concern for its progreſs. And yet, ſo rare is any thing of this kind, that when it appears as a ſort of prodigy, it is looked upon, by moſt, as romance and extravagance. Let experience tell if this is not often the caſe. When any one appears, in imitation of the Scripture ſaints, to grieve for the ſins of others, or diſcovers any more than ordinary concern for their reformation, are not all his endeavours immediately reſiſted and reſented as troubleſome, or branded with every name of contempt, as viſionary frenzy and enthuſiaſm?

In the third place, From what hath been ſaid on this ſubject you may learn what ought to be the great aim of every ſerious and ſenſible Chriſtian among us at preſent, in his interceſſion at the throne of grace, viz. That the power of the Almighty may appear in behalf of this nation, in ſuch a manner as all may be obliged to ſay, "This is the doing of the Lord." That, as he uſeth to do on extraordinary occaſions, he may raiſe up inſtruments for this purpoſe, who may be as poliſhed ſhafts in his own hand, and may have a ſingle eye to his own glory. That not for our ſakes, who have deſerved to be caſt off for ever, but for his own name's ſake, he would ſupport thoſe who ſtill adhere to the Proteſtant cauſe. And in a particular manner for this

end, that he would discover his power and glory in an eminent and remarkable revival of religion among all ranks. That our blessed Redeemer, the King of Sion, who reigns to all generations, who hath ascended up on high and received gifts for men, would send forth his Spirit in a large and plentiful measure. That his work and power may appear in all his gracious influences, convincing and converting sinners, sanctifying, quickening and comforting believers. That this may be a common blessing on all corners of the land, on persons of every class and denomination, of every rank and degree, from the highest to the lowest, of every station and office, civil and sacred. Above all, that he would "clothe his priests with salvation, that his saints may shout aloud for joy." O when shall the time come, when "the Lord of hosts shall be for a crown of glory, and a diadem of beauty to the residue of his people!" when, instead of fine schemes spun for the honour of their makers, those who are called ministers of Christ shall preach the gospel, "with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven!" when the truth of God, by its simplicity, majesty, force and efficacy, shall make its way into the hearts of the most obstinate, and Satan's kingdom fall as lightning before it. Plead, my beloved hearers, that Protestants in general may be brought back to their first faith and their first love; that the unhappy divisions among us may be abolished; and that the bond and centre of union may be Christ crucified, the only Author of salvation; that men may be no longer ranked in parties and marshalled under names, but

the great and only ſtrife may be, who ſhall love our Redeemer moſt, and who ſhall ſerve him with the greateſt zeal.

And in this critical conjuncture, when the bloody ſword is threatening ſo many nations, and when there is ſo general a combination of antichriſtian powers, be earneſt in prayer that it may pleaſe God to ſubvert their ſchemes, and turn their counſels into fooliſhneſs; and that he with whom is terrible majeſty, may conſume "the man of ſin with the ſpirit of his mouth, and deſtroy him with the brightneſs of his coming." Pray for our gracious ſovereign king George, under whoſe mild and legal government we have long enjoyed as much happineſs as our national guilt would allow; that God, by whom "kings reign and princes decree juſtice," would give him a wiſe underſtanding heart in his fear, protect his perſon, direct his councils, and proſper his arms; and long preſerve his numerous iſſue, as happy pledges of the ſecurity of our civil and religious liberty. Let us alſo, while we give thanks to God for raiſing up an eminent prince in Germany as the head of the reformed intereſt, and ſignally ſupporting him hitherto, pray that he may continue his protection to him, encourage his heart, and ſtrengthen his hands, and fight his battles. In fine, let us pray for the ſpeedy accompliſhment of the prophecy, whoever ſhall be the inſtrument of it, of the downfall of Antichriſt, when the cry ſhall be heard, "Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and ſhall ariſe no more."

In the laſt place, For our encouragement in this

duty let us remember that we ſerve an unchangeable God, the Rock of ages. We pray for the appearance of the arm of the Lord "as in ancient days, in the generations of old," when it "cut Rahab and wounded the dragon." Review the hiſtory of his conduct to the church and people of Iſrael, how with a mighty hand and out-ſtretched arm he delivered them from bondage, and humbled their proud oppreſſors. And remember how often, in ſucceeding ages, he has appeared in behalf of his own people, and ſupported his own cauſe when at the very loweſt, and as it were in an expiring ſtate. How low was the intereſt of Sion at the Reformation, when all the kings of the earth ſerved the "ſcarlet whore," and "were drunk with the wine of the wrath of her fornication!" How thick the darkneſs that overſpread the nations, and how univerſal the dominion of error? And yet, in oppoſition to all the cunning of earthly policy, in oppoſition to all the fury of perſecuting cruelty, he enabled a few plain men, lovers of the truth, to aſſert, to defend, and to ſpread it.

The moſt remarkable times of the revival of religion in this part of the united kingdom, immediately ſucceeded times of the greateſt apoſtaſy, when truth ſeemed to be fallen in the ſtreets, and equity could not enter. This was the caſe immediately before the year 1638. Corruption in doctrine, looſeneſs in practice, and ſlaviſh ſubmiſſion in politics, had overſpread the church of Scotland. And yet, in a little time, ſhe appeared in greater purity and in greater dignity than ever ſhe had done be-

fore, or perhaps than ever ſhe hath done ſince that period. In the ſame manner, immediately before the happy Revolution, how deſperate in appearance was the ſituation of this church! When all the beſt, as well as many of the nobleſt perſons in the nation, were chaſed as fugitives from their dwellings, and conſidered as unworthy of an abode on earth! when many of our worthy anceſtors fell in battle, died on a ſcaffold, or were murdered in the fields by the unrelenting rage of eccleſiaſtic tyranny! and when worſhipping the Lord God of our fathers, according to his own word, was a capital crime! Yet our captivity was brought back, and "we were as men that dreamed;" ſo unexpected was the mercy.

Let no Chriſtian therefore give way to deſponding thoughts. Though infidelity unreſiſted ſpreads its poiſon, though profaneneſs and enmity to religion and ſerioufneſs every where abound, though there are few to ſupport the intereſt of truth and righteouſneſs, though we have ſeen a new thing on the earth, a miniſter of Chriſt leaving the pulpit for the ſtage, let us not be diſcouraged. We plead the cauſe that ſhall finally prevail. Religion ſhall riſe from its ruins; and its oppreſſed ſtate at preſent ſhould not only excite us to pray, but encourage us to hope for its ſpeedy revival. While every one is diligent in his own ſphere, and in his proper duty, and earneſtly pleading for the revelation of the arm of the Lord, let us recollect his favour and protection to the church in every time of need, and his faithfulneſs which is to all gene-

rations. Let us ſay with the Pſalmiſt, "Walk about Sion, and go round about her; tell the towers thereof. Mark ye well her bulwarks, conſider her palaces; that ye may tell it to the generation following. For this God is our God for ever and ever, he will be our guide even unto death," Pſal. xlviii. 12, 13, 14.

SERMON XIX.

SEASONABLE ADVICE TO YOUNG PERSONS.

Preached at the Laigh Church of Paiſley, on Sabbath, February 21. 1762.

To which is prefixed, An authentic Narrative of the diſorderly and riotous meeting on the night before the celebration of the Lord's Supper in that place, which gave occaſion to the Diſcourſe.

Dedicated to the Bailies and Town-Council of Paiſley.

TO THE PUBLIC.

THE publication of the following Sermon is not owing to choice but neceſſity. A proceſs of ſcandal was carried on againſt the perſons who gave occaſion to its being preached; and they, inſtead of any ſubmiſſion or penitence, thought proper to make heavy complaints againſt the author of the ſermon; and to give an account of what was ſaid in it, very imperfect and unjuſt, as may well be ſuppoſed. In anſwer to this, he found it neceſſary to declare his willingneſs and reſolution to publiſh the ſermon,

and to prefix a diſtinct narration of the proceedings, ſo far as they had come to light, of that impious aſſembly, held within the bounds of his charge, that the Public might judge whether there was not more than ſufficient cauſe given for what was then ſaid. By the following narrative and ſermon he now propoſes to acquit himſelf of both parts of this promiſe.

On Saturday the 6th of February 1762, being the day before the celebration of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper in Paiſley, ſome young men, who, it is generally believed, had all been at church, dined immediately after ſermon in James Chamber's room. After dinner Robert Hunter, who never was a communicant, produced one of the church tokens, well knowing what uſe it was intended to ſerve. Being aſked where he got it, ſaid he got it from Judas Iſcariot; and, as one of the company declares, offered to play odds or evens with him which of them ſhould uſe it. They were then invited all to a glaſs in William Wilſon's room, which he choſe that night to take poſſeſſion of, and indeed to give it a very dreadful conſecration. In the interval of their meeting, Robert Hunter ſent the token to a young woman in the place, incloſed in a letter. What were the contents of the letter cannot be known. Common fame ſaid it was inviting her to their ſacrament; he himſelf pretended it was very innocent, but took care, as ſoon as the rumour broke out, to get the letter and burn it. The reader will immediately reflect what could be the intention, and what might have been the effects of this conduct. It was eaſy in this way to ſend the moſt notorious

profligate to the table of the Lord, to the unſpeakable ſcandal of the congregation, as well as miſchief to his own ſoul.

About ſix of the clock the ſame evening, or ſoon after, there met according to appointment in William Wilſon's room, the ſaid Robert Hunter and William Wilſon, manufacturers in Paiſley, John Snodgraſs, writer there, William M'Crotchet, enſign or ſergeant in the army, James and David Chalmers, and Robert Croſs junior, merchants in Paiſley. By their own confeſſion, and the depoſition of ſeveral witneſſes, they employed a good part of the time in mock preaching, and that not merely imitating the tones or geſtures of miniſters in indifferent words, but the only expreſſions that were diſtinguiſhed by the witneſſes who heard them on the ſtreet, were the words of Scripture. Two witneſſes depone that, to the beſt of their judgment, they heard them praying in mockery; and when aſked if they were ſure it was praying and not preaching, perſiſted in affirming it was praying. The only uncertainty this evidence labours under is, that not hearing the particular words uſed, the only way by which they diſtinguiſhed it was by the ſound; but it is to be obſerved, that both witneſſes were poſitive; that they agreed together as to the time when this happened, and that it was not the ſame time that the other witneſſes depone they were preaching, but at a very conſiderable diſtance; ſo that there is little probability of the one being miſtaken for the other. By their own confeſſions, and the depoſitions of witneſſes, they were guilty of profane ſwearing. The noiſe of their meeting was

ſuch as alarmed the whole neighbourhood; but what is moſt tremendous of all, by the declaration of Robert Hunter, one of themſelves, William Mac-Crotchet uſed ſome of the words of the inſtitution. The ſame thing is declared by William Wilſon of John Snodgraſs; and upon the ſtricteſt re-examination he perſiſted in declaring that he was certain it was done in the company, and he thought it was by that perſon.

When theſe facts are laid together, and all the circumſtances of the tranſaction are weighed, is it poſſible in words to paint the atrociouſneſs of their crime? Is there any ground to wonder at the greatneſs of the ſcandal? Is there reaſon to complain that the miniſter in whoſe bounds the offence was committed, and under whoſe charge almoſt all the offenders live, ſhould think of preaching on ſuch a ſubject as it appears he did, and now with concern finds himſelf obliged to publiſh? The very choice of ſuch a night for ſuch a merry meeting, and the diſturbance given to the place almoſt to the hour of midnight, though there had been no more in it, were ſurely highly indecent. But when we add to this the loud profanation of the Almighty's name, and ſpending the moſt part, if not the whole of the time in mocking the exerciſes of piety, how deep and aggravated is the guilt! Above all, when it is conſidered that this ſeems to have been without bounds, not ſparing even the moſt ſolemn and ſacred rite of our holy religion! It is true, ſome of them obſtinately deny this laſt and heavieſt part of the charge. It doth not indeed appear, and we hope it

is not true, that there was a formal celebration, and general or common participation in mockery of the ſacrament of the Lord's ſupper; but if there had been no profane alluſion to it in the performances of the acting mimics, it is not to be ſuppoſed or imagined that it would have been confeſſed by two of the perſons preſent. Though this ſhould not militate againſt the reſt, it certainly muſt militate againſt themſelves. The time of the meeting, the token produced before it, the letter with the token ſent, the other things which they certainly did, and the unſuſpected declaration of two of the guilty, who ſeemed at firſt penitent, though afterward they altered their conduct, and joined with the reſt in a common defence, are ſo ſtrong that it is impoſſible to deſtroy the belief of it in an impartial mind; the rather when we add, that afterwards David Chalmers confeſſed it ſtill more fully than any of the other two. This, though it was too late to be in the proceſs, or rather by great art and influence kept out of it, may be ſafely affirmed, becauſe it was in the preſence of three perſons. But to cut the matter ſhort, the uſe of ſome of the words of the inſtitution with a ſolemn air as of a miniſter, and alſo ſome of the other words of Scripture, is affirmed by William Wilſon of John Snodgraſs, in a voluntary declaration when he was not adduced as an evidence. Let John Snodgraſs, therefore, who conſiders this as ſo injurious to him, proſecute William Wilſon for ſlander, and get him puniſhed in the manner he juſtly deſerves if it be falſe; and if this is not done, he muſt forgive many, and par-

ticularly the author of the following ſermon, for believing it to be true.

PSAL. i. 1.

Bleſſed is the man that walketh not in the counſel of the ungodly, nor ſtandeth in the way of ſinners, nor ſitteth in the ſeat of the ſcornful.

THERE is an old and beaten obſervation, that human nature, in all ages, is the ſame. To this I add, or rather offer by way of illuſtration of it, that ſin, which bears ſo much ſway in human characters and actions, has been the ſame, in its operation and influence, in all ages, ſince the fall of Adam. For this reaſon the characters drawn in the holy Scriptures, and particularly the obſervations on human life, contained in the Pſalms of David, the Proverbs of Solomon, and book of Eccleſiaſtes, are as perfectly adapted to the preſent age as if they were but of yeſterday's date.

As the ten commandments, which are the ſum of the moral law, conſiſt moſtly of prohibitions, the Pſalmiſt, in this paſſage, draws the character of the good man in a negative form, by its oppoſition to the bad. At the ſame time, the danger to which the unwary are expoſed, the enticing and deceitful nature of ſin, and its monſtrous enormity when arrived at its full height, are couched in the moſt admirable manner: "Bleſſed is the man that walketh not in the counſel of the ungodly, nor ſtandeth in the way of ſinners, nor ſitteth in the ſeat of the ſcornful."

It is not agreed among interpreters who was the author of this pſalm; and indeed it is a matter more of curioſity than moment very critically to inquire. Some think it was the Pſalmiſt David, becauſe of the high eſteem expreſſed in it for the law of God, a thing which ſo remarkably diſtinguiſhes his other writings. Others refer it to a later period; and ſuppoſe that Ezra, or ſome other after the captivity who collected the ſacred hymns of different authors into one volume, prefixed this as a ſort of argument or preface to the whole. It is indeed a ſummary of all that follow. It plainly contains a character both of good men and bad; the uſual courſe of divine providence towards each of theſe claſſes, as well as the final iſſue of their conduct, in the everlaſting happineſs of the one, and the everlaſting miſery of the other.

Even the moſt curſory reader muſt obſerve, that there is a gradation in the expreſſions of the text, which riſe one above another in their ſtrength and energy; nay, it is the opinion of many, that they are choſen with peculiar art, and contain a double, if not a threefold gradation.

1. In the character, beginning with the *ungodly*, who are without proper impreſſions of religion, and habitually governed by other principles than the fear of God. Next, *ſinners*, or thoſe who are more openly flagitious, and viſibly guilty of groſs crimes. And finally, the *ſcornful*, who ſet reproof at defiance, and treat every thing ſerious and ſacred with contempt and diſdain.

2. In the communication of others with them, *walking*, which ſeems to imply occaſional, unforeſeen,

and tranſient intercourſe; *ſtanding*, which ſeems to indicate a greater degree of approbation and voluntary compliance with their example; and *ſitting*, which ſignifies being fixed and ſettled in an evil courſe, and refuſing to depart from it.—To this ſome add the other expreſſions, the *counſel*, the *way*, and the *ſeat*; on which I forbear to inſiſt, but proceed to obſerve,

That we have in this paſſage a moſt uſeful and inſtructive leſſon of great moment in every place and age; and peculiarly ſuited, on ſeveral accounts, to the preſent circumſtances of this congregation. It is therefore my reſolution to diſcourſe a little, through the aſſiſtance of divine grace, on the three diſtinct branches into which it may be naturally divided.

I. The infectious nature of ſin, or the danger of "walking in the counſel of the ungodly."

II. The deceitful and hardening nature of ſin, which inſenſibly leads from "walking in the counſel of the ungodly," to "ſtanding in the way of ſinners."

III. The finiſhing ſtage of wickedneſs, the moſt criminal and moſt pernicious character, viz. of the *ſcornful*, who are bold enough to treat things ſerious and ſacred with deriſion.

Having done this, I ſhall make ſome application of the ſubject, for your inſtruction and direction.

In the firſt place, Let us conſider the infectious nature of ſin, or the danger of walking in the counſel of the ungodly. That the ſociety of bad men is

highly dangerous to all, but eſpecially to young perſons, is indeed a truth which no ſober man will deny, and which hath been often ſet in the ſtrongeſt light by religious and moral writers; it may therefore ſeem unneceſſary to inſiſt upon it. But, my brethren, I am perſuaded that it fares often with known and common truths, as with common mercies, they are deſpiſed for their cheapneſs. Though their certainty be readily allowed, their uſe and application is notwithſtanding, or perhaps for that very reaſon, in a great meaſure neglected. How ſeldom is it that men make the diſtinction with care, and act upon it with prudence and reſolution, either in their own conduct, or in the diſpoſal of their children! Bear with me, therefore, while I endeavour to impreſs your minds with a ſenſe of your obligation to depart from the ſociety of evil doers, and to preſerve, with the utmoſt ſolicitude, all young perſons under your care from the mortal contagion.

For the importance and neceſſity of this you have the concurrent teſtimony of wiſe and good men, in every age and nation; experience hath taught it to the moſt barbarous, as well as moſt improved and poliſhed people. There is no nation of which hiſtory hath preſerved us any account, but in their proverbial ſayings, which are the product of time, we find a warning againſt the infection of corrupt ſociety. What dying parent, in his laſt or parting adieu to his children, ever omitted to caution them againſt the ſociety of bad men? nay, doth not daily experience prove this, beyond diſpute, to every one who hath the leaſt degree either of memory or reflection? Is there among you any perſon who has

arrived at the unhappy diſtinction of being known for a profligate? Whenever this happens, thoſe about him are able to mark the progreſs of his corruption, and can even point out the perſons or ſocieties where he was firſt taught the rudiments of vice, and initiated in the principles of licentiouſneſs and riot. I am none of thoſe who either deny or conceal the original, inherent, univerſal corruption of human nature; and yet I ſcruple not to affirm, that example, inſtruction, and aſſiſtance, are neceſſary to our improvement even in vice. Without this, no ſingle perſon is capable of arriving at that degree of depravity which we have ſometimes occaſion to obſerve.

Whoever would examine into the reaſons, and impreſs his mind with a ſenſe of the danger of corrupt ſociety, eſpecially to youth, may juſt reflect upon the following particulars.

1. We are all by nature prone to ſin. It is the growth of the ſoil, as weeds of the curſed ground. If weeds can hardly be reſtrained by the utmoſt diligence and care of the huſbandman, what an enormous product might he expect if he would directly apply himſelf to their encouragement and cultivation! Juſt ſo, if by the utmoſt care and attention parents can hardly reſtrain the irregularities of their children, and form them to true piety and goodneſs, what wickedneſs may they not arrive at if they are delivered over to ſchools of profanity, and ſuffered to form their ſentiments and manners from thoſe who have long "walked in the ways of their own hearts, and in the ſight of their own eyes," without "fearing God, or regarding man!"

2. Young perſons are ignorant and unſuſpicious; ſtrangers to the world, they are alike ignorant of the characters of men and the effects of vicious courſes. What a prey muſt ſuch be to the artful and inſinuating language of thoſe who, enſlaved by habit, and wearing the chains of vice, find their chief remaining pleaſure in ſeducing others into the ſame miſerable ſtate? Juſtly is the great enemy of mankind called the deceiver, becauſe he betrayed our firſt parents into rebellion by a lie; and in the ſame way he and all his ſervants continue to paint and varniſh over ſin with falſe colours, that it may be embraced without reluctance by thoſe who know not that afterwards "it biteth like a ſerpent, and ſtingeth like an adder." Need I tell you in what a decent garb ſin is often clothed, and what honourable names it often aſſumes in the world to gain the eaſier admiſſion? Senſuality and intemperance is ſocial affection and good fellowſhip; filthy obſcene converſation is but harmleſs mirth and freedom; anger and reſentment are but honour, reſolution, and dignity of mind. In ſhort, the whole tenor and ſtrain of faſhionable converſation is often little elſe than a ſtrong illuſion put upon the mind to pervert the dictates of reaſon, and evade the reproofs of conſcience. How dangerous ſuch intercourſe to young unwary minds, who are often deeply penetrated with the poiſon, before they ſo much as ſuſpect the deſign of its being adminiſtered! It requires no common degree of fortitude and reſolution, as well as no ſmall meaſure of ſpiritual wiſdom, to reſiſt the importunity of ſinners, and unravel the ſubtilty with which they lie in wait to deceive.

3. Vice is uſually baited with pleaſure, of which young perſons are peculiarly ſenſible; their affections of every kind are in the moſt lively and vigorous ſtate. One of the firſt and moſt important leſſons which parents and guardians muſt teach them, is moderation and reſtraint; whereas the immediate effect of aſſociating with the profane, is not only to ſtrengthen their paſſions by indulgence, but to inſtruct them how to plead in their defence; and, above all, to inſpire them with an abhorrence of confinement and rule. From theſe unhappy attachments, theſe moſt pernicious friendſhips it is, that inſtruction, however excellent, is unwillingly liſtened to; and the moſt wiſe and gentle government is eſteemed harſh and ſevere. It has been ſometimes obſerved, that perſons ſtrictly and piouſly educated, when they have come into the world, have run headlong into the moſt vicious and abandoned courſe of life. This has been commonly aſcribed to the rigour of their former confinement, and an advice grafted upon it, that parents ſhould be leſs ſevere to their children, leſt they ſhould more than compenſate this early reſtraint, by the liberties which they afterwards aſſume. But though I willingly admit that every parent ſhould temper his authority with gentleneſs and love, yet I am far from thinking the effect juſt now mentioned is aſcribed to its proper cauſe; it is not owing ſo much to the rigour of parental authority, as to young perſons getting into the ſociety of men without principle, and there ſecretly imbibing theſe vicious deſires which afterwards they rejoice in an opportunity of gratifying to the full. However ſtrict and ſevere any perſon's

education may be, if he comes to maturity of age before he contracts an intimacy with thoſe who juſtify the commiſſion of ſin, conſcience will have acquired ſo great authority, that all ſolicitation to groſs wickedneſs will be received with abhorrence. This opinion is ſupported by a fact which I imagine I have obſerved, that the children of pious parents, who are betrayed into vicious courſes, are almoſt always ſuch as have been moſt early removed from their immediate inſpection.

4. The danger of corrupt ſociety to young perſons, appears from their being expoſed to ridicule and ſcorn, which is, of all other trials, hardeſt for them to bear. I ſhall have occaſion, on the third general head, to ſpeak more fully on this ſubject; but in the mean time it is certain, that a ſenſe of ſhame is ſtrong in young perſons in general, and that ridicule is the uſual weapon by which adepts in vice aſſault the cauſe of truth and piety; by which indeed they commonly endeavour to deſtroy all regard to decency and order. It is lamentable to think how often perſons of excellent capacity and admirable diſpoſitions have been led aſtray by the abuſe of this moſt amiable quality, a ſenſe of ſhame.

From all theſe conſiderations we need not be ſurpriſed at the frequent and ſtrong cautions given in the word of God upon this ſubject. Prov. xiii. 20. "He that walketh with wiſe men ſhall be wiſe; but a companion of fools ſhall be deſtroyed."—Chap. xxviii. 7. "Whoſo keepeth the law is a wiſe ſon; but he that is a companion of riotous men ſhameth his father." But there is nothing more moving than that earneſt and pathetic exhortation,

chap. iv. 14, 15. "Enter not into the path of the wicked, and go not in the way of evil men; avoid it; paſs not by it; turn from it, and paſs away." The wiſe man's inſiſting upon his important counſel, and the reiteration of the expreſſions, ſerve to convey in the ſtrongeſt manner, a ſenſe of the certain ruin of thoſe who neglect to obſerve it.

II. Let us now proceed to conſider the hardening nature of ſin, which leads from "walking in the counſel of the ungodly, to ſtanding in the way of ſinners." Upon this, as on the former particular, I may obſerve it is a known and beaten ſubject, on which it is eaſy to ſay things ſtrong, but difficult to ſay any thing new. There are ſeveral juſt remarks upon it, or ſtriking ſimilitudes, which have been handed down from the earlieſt ages, and were probably the firſt fruits of human experience. The little that I am at preſent to repeat or add ſhall be divided into two parts: 1. The gradual and inſenſible progreſs of ſin, which leads the ſinner on from one ſtep to another, till he is irrecoverably loſt. 2. The ſtrength and power of inveterate habit.

1. The inſenſible progreſs of ſin. It is wonderful by what artful methods, what plauſible pretences, and what ſlow degrees, ſin makes its firſt approaches. Let ſome of thoſe perſons who are now loſt to all ſenſe of duty or of ſhame, reflect, if poſſible, with what horror they would once have thought of the practices which at preſent they are not able to forſake. Every ſin, how ſmall ſoever, opens a paſſage for the admiſſion of multitudes of others, breaks the reſtraint of conſcience, habituates and emboldens the ſinner. The ancients were wont to

ſay, That the way of ſin is down-hill; every ſtep a man takes on this declivity accelerates his motion, ſo that it becomes more and more difficult, and at laſt impoſſible to ſtop his courſe. This is what the apoſtle Paul had in his view, when he gave this excellent precept to the Chriſtian Hebrews, Heb. iii. 13. "But exhort one another daily, while it is called to-day, leſt any of you be hardened through the deceitfulneſs of ſin." We may ſay of ſin, in general, what Solomon ſays of ſtrife, "The beginning of it is like the letting out of water." If you watch againſt the beginning of ſin, you may hope to prevail; but if you once grant it indulgence, it will eſtabliſh and increaſe its own power. To attempt then to ſtop its progreſs, is like endeavouring to gather together a flood of water, after you have, with your own hands, opened the ſluices which have cauſed it to overflow.

2. To the inſenſible progreſs of ſin, add the ſtrength and power of inveterate habit. This is repreſented to us in the ſtrongeſt terms in Scripture, where the changing of an inveterate habit is compared to a natural impoſſibility, Jer. xiii. 23. "Can the Ethiopian change his ſkin, or the leopard his ſpots? then may ye alſo do good, that are accuſtomed to do evil."

As we may receive many uſeful moral leſſons from the viſible creation and the courſe of nature, ſo this in particular, of the force of habit, is, if I may ſpeak ſo, written in the moſt legible characters, and repeated in every page of both. A ſtone which has long continued in one place makes itſelf a bed, and is with great difficulty removed; a plant or tree

that has long been confined to one poſition, or made to grow in a particular ſhape, will ſeldom ever receive any other. This is alſo the caſe with our own bodily frame. Particular poſtures or motions to which we have been early habituated, can ſcarcely be altered by the utmoſt attention, and the ſtrongeſt inclination of the will; the obſtinacy is ſtill greater in all habits where deſire and affection have place. It is eaſy to ſee every day the violent attachment men have to employments and pleaſures, however trifling in themſelves, to which they have been long accuſtomed. But it is greateſt of all in ſinful habits, becauſe in them the force of cuſtom is added to the original ſtrength of natural corruption.

Both the above particulars may be illuſtrated, by obſerving how much habit and example together operate to the improvement and perfection of guilt in large and populous cities. There we may often find ſo aſtoniſhing a degree of wickedneſs of every ſort, as it is mortifying to think that human nature ſhould be capable of; there we may find perſons who will perpetrate calmly and ſedately what would ſurpriſe a leſs knowing ſinner ſo much as to hear of. And what pity is it that there ſhould be found ſome who, during their occaſional reſidence in places of great reſort, lay down their innocence inſtead of their ruſticity, and bring home no other accompliſhment but an inſolence and boldneſs of countenance in the commiſſion of ſin! that, inſtructed in the principles, as well as habituated to the practice of impiety, they are not content with doing evil, but diſcover an incredible induſtry and aſſiduity in deceiving

and ſeducing others! And ſhall I not add, what pity is it that ſome, inſtead of improving and adorning their minds by application to ſtudy, or ſtoring them with uſeful knowledge, do more than loſe their time by drinking in the poiſon of infidel writings! Inſtead of fitting themſelves to diſcharge the duties of public or private life with propriety and dignity, they only acquire the unhappy talent of ſetting their minds at eaſe in the commiſſion of ſin, and make large additions to their own natural depravity of heart.

III. Let us conſider the finiſhing ſtage of wickedneſs, the moſt criminal and the moſt pernicious character, viz. that of the ſcornful, who are bold enough to treat things ſerious and ſacred with deriſion.

This part of the ſubject, my brethren, merits your particular attention, and naturally divides itſelf into theſe two branches: Firſt, The ſin and danger of it to the perſons who are guilty of it. Secondly, The unhappy influence it hath in polluting others

1. The ſin and danger of it to the guilty perſons. Whoever will conſider the ſtate of mind from which ſuch deriſion muſt flow, will immediately perceive that it implies the higheſt degree of profaneneſs and impiety. It is ſuch an audacious attack upon the majeſty of the living God, as muſt ſtrike every thinking perſon with aſtoniſhment and horror. One of the firſt principles of all religion is reverence for the Deity, and for every thing that hath a viſible relation to him. This we find written upon the conſcience, in general, even of the moſt blinded hea-

thens. The common and trivial uſe of the name of God is prohibited under the ſevereſt ſanctions in the oracles of truth. We find alſo ſome inſtances there of mere irreverence being puniſhed in a very terrible manner. The angelic hoſts, though perfectly pure and holy, are yet repreſented as deeply penetrated with a ſenſe of the extreme diſproportion between uncreated excellence and created weakneſs, and filled with the higheſt veneration of him who only is holy. Iſaiah vi. 1, 2, 3. "In the year that king Uzziah died, I ſaw alſo the Lord ſitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. Above it ſtood the ſeraphims: each one had ſix wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. And one cried unto another, and ſaid, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hoſts, the whole earth is full of his glory." It may ſeem unneceſſary or improper to add, and yet it gives me pleaſure that I can do it with truth, the ſame thing has evidently diſtinguiſhed ſome of the beſt and greateſt men on earth. We are well informed, that ſome of the greateſt inquirers into nature, as they grew in years, and increaſed in the knowledge of the works of God, did alſo viſibly grow in an awe and reverence of their almighty Maker. Of one in particular it is ſaid, that he never mentioned the name of God without a ſenſible pauſe in his diſcourſe. After this, what can we think of any poor creature, whoſe breath is in his noſtrils, being guilty of contempt and ſcorn of the name, attributes, works or worſhip of God!

There is a remarkable difference between ſins of this kind, and many other ſins which are, notwith-

ſtanding, very heinous and aggravated in the ſight of God. Into many other ſins of a very groſs nature, a man may be hurried by the violence of paſſion, or betrayed by the ſuddenneſs of temptation; but, if I miſtake not, ſcorn of things ſacred muſt always be a deliberate crime; the ſin cannot be committed without a good deal of compoſure and preſence of mind; reaſon is not over-borne, as in other caſes, by appetite, but reaſon itſelf (if the perverted gift of God in ſuch perſons may be called ſo) is principal in the guilt. A ſcorner is never tempted, properly ſpeaking, but by theſe acts and exerciſes of religion which ſhould excite the veneration of all, and do excite the veneration of many, not excepting ſome of the moſt profligate.

Contempt of things ſacred is an entire victory over conſcience. In many caſes men ſin with ſome reluctance. It is not ſo much their choice, as they are over-borne by the ſtrength of corruption, and vitiate the peace of their minds to gratify the demands of luſt; hence remorſe often ſucceeds the indulgence, and though real reformation does not take place, yet it lays the ſinner under frequent and conſiderable reſtraints. But in treating things ſacred with ſcorn, the mind is wholly at eaſe, and finds its pleaſure in the very impiety itſelf. The truth is, ſo entire is the victory over conſcience, that nothing but ſettled atheiſm and infidelity can be guilty of it, according to that juſt expreſſion of the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. x. 13. "Wherefore doth the wicked contemn God? He hath ſaid in his heart, thou wilt not require it."

It is alſo an entire victory over ſhame; this is

commonly the laſt reſtraint that ſinners overthrow. Many are confined and kept in awe by the fear of man, long after they have caſt off the fear of God. From the ſhamefulneſs of ſin, religion preſerves ſome degree of credit, even where a great plurality is in the oppoſite intereſt. For this reaſon the prophet Jeremiah mentions it as a great aggravation of the ſins of his countrymen, that they were loſt to all ſenſe of ſhame. Jer. vi. 15. "Were they aſhamed when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all aſhamed, neither could they bluſh; therefore they ſhall fall among them that fall: at the time that I viſit them they ſhall be caſt down, ſaith the Lord." But is it not evident that ſcorners are deſtitute of ſhame? They have indeed not only extinguiſhed it in themſelves, but the manifeſt deſign of their converſation is to deſtroy it in the minds of others.

I need add nothing further to ſhew the guilt and danger of perſons of this character, but putting you in mind of the rank which it holds in ſeveral catalogues of crying ſins in the holy Scriptures, and the awful judgments of God which are denounced againſt it. The prophet Ezekiel, in enumerating the ſins of Jeruſalem, among many enormities hath this, Ezek. xxii. 8. "Thou haſt deſpiſed mine holy things, and profaned my Sabbaths." And the prophet Iſaiah, Iſa. xxviii. 14. 21, 22. "Now therefore hear the word of the Lord, ye ſcornful men that rule this people which is in Jeruſalem.—For the Lord ſhall riſe up as in mount Perazim, he ſhall be wroth as in the valley of Gibeon, that he may

do his work, his ſtrange work; and bring to paſs his act, his ſtrange act. Now therefore be not mockers, leſt your bands be made ſtrong; for I have heard from the Lord God of hoſts, a conſumption even determined upon the whole earth." See alſo the ſtate of things in Jeruſalem, immediately before the Babyloniſh captivity, 2 Chron. xxxvi. 16. "But they mocked the meſſengers of God, and deſpiſed his words, and miſuſed his prophets, until the wrath of the Lord aroſe againſt his people, till there was no remedy."

2. How unhappy is the influence of this character upon others! As it is highly criminal, it is pernicious in the ſame proportion. Conſidered only as an example, it muſt have dangerous effects; many ſins ſhun the light, and are, by thoſe that commit them, concealed with the utmoſt care. When that is the caſe, whatever they may be to the guilty perſon, they are far from being ſo dangerous to the Public, as thoſe crimes that are not only often viſible, but done on purpoſe to be ſeen. Now ſcoffers at things ſacred muſt always be an example, as the crime cannot be committed alone; and indeed they often aſpire at a kind of character for deſpiſing religion, and would be greatly mortified were their accompliſhments of this kind hidden from the world.

Neither is it merely a common example. Scoffers are not only barely ſinners, they are advocates for ſin; it is their conſtant ſtudy to break the reſtraints of conſcience, and weaken every moral obligation in others as well as in themſelves. This too they endeavour to effect in the moſt agreeable man-

ner. Contempt of religion makes a part of their ſocial mirth; and theſe two things are ſoon looked upon by the unwary youth as ſo inſeparable, that the one is quite taſteleſs and inſipid, unleſs it is ſeaſoned by the other.

It deſerves particular conſideration on this ſubject, that ſcoffing at things ſacred is apt to give natural modeſty, and the ſenſe of ſhame in young perſons, a wrong and contrary turn. Modeſty is the ſtrongeſt natural fence to virtue. We find notwithſtanding, very frequently, that perſons of great natural modeſty have not courage ſufficient to profeſs or practiſe what conſcience dictates to be their duty. How unhappy is it when ſo excellent a preſervative from vice is thus quite perverted, and has an oppoſite effect! All hiſtory is full of the powerful effects of a ſenſe of ſhame, both in doing good and evil. It breaks the ſtrongeſt of all natural attachments; it is not to be overcome by the ſevereſt laws, though fortified with the moſt terrible ſanctions. Now, as it needs no proof that ſcoffing at ſacred things tends to pervert the ſenſe of ſhame, it muſt have the greateſt and moſt immediate effect in bringing on a general diſſolution of manners.

The malignant influence of profane ſcorn is not confined to young perſons, there being very few of any character who are not hurt by it in a moſt ſenſible manner. Would you be convinced of this? How rarely do we find any poſſeſſed of a determined courage and reſolution in oppoſing faſhionable crimes! How unwilling are the beſt to ſuffer ſhame for adhering to their duty! What a variety of efforts will be made to eſcape it! Contempt is diſagreeable at

any rate, and it is intolerable to pride, ſome remains of which, capable of being irritated, are to be found in the very beſt men on earth. For this reaſon, the moſt eſtabliſhed Chriſtians do carefully ſhun all unneceſſary ſociety with wicked men, knowing how difficult it is to avoid ſin in one ſhape or other. If ſuch is the caſe with the beſt, how dangerous muſt the ſociety of ſcorners be to all who are able to bear them, but eſpecially to thoſe who "have pleaſure in them!"

It will not be improper here to obſerve, that one great reaſon why ſcorn and ridicule is ſo hurtful to religion is, that it attacks things ſacred through the medium of human weakneſs. True piety and virtue is in itſelf ſo venerable an object, that it is not poſſible to render it ridiculous but by miſrepreſentation; however, as it is always in this world attended with human infirmity, this affords a handle to profane perſons to load it with reproach. Their ſucceſs in this unhappy deſign is no greater than may naturally be expected; few are able to diſtinguiſh between a perſon and his cauſe, nor indeed is it poſſible to attack the one without wounding the other. It evidently appears, that it is impoſſible to treat religious perſons in general, or the expreſſions, forms and rites commonly appropriated to religious worſhip with ſcorn, and not, at the ſame time, bring religion itſelf into contempt.

I do not mean by this to plead for approbation, or even indulgence to any indecency by which folly or vanity may abuſe or diſgrace the worſhip of God; far from it. I think every thing of that kind ought to be reproved with ſeverity, and oppoſed with re-

ſolution; but I contend that it is infinitely more proper to treat it with abhorrence and deteſtation, than with ſcorn. Whoever will give himſelf this liberty, may eaſily find an opportunity, from the weakneſs inſeparable from humanity, to throw off that reverence for God and his ſervice which it ought to be his chief ſolicitude to preſerve and improve. There are many whoſe viſible weakneſs is to be lamented; and, perhaps, there is no human character at all ſo perfectly decent in every reſpect, but, by imitation and a little aggravation, it may be rendered ridiculous.

Let it alſo be conſidered, that it requires far leſs comprehenſion of mind to expoſe the folly and weakneſs of others, or even to invent plauſible falſehoods and miſrepreſent them, than to reaſon with juſtneſs and propriety on the moſt common ſubjects. A very ſmall degree of ability is ſufficient to accompliſh a ſcoffer, who is not reſtrained by any ſenſe of duty. Nor is this to be wondered at; for there is always a ſufficient number to whoſe underſtandings the moſt vile and miſerable performance is perfectly adapted.

In ſupport of all this I could adduce many examples, abundantly known and familiar; but, for certain reaſons, I ſhall only mention a very celebrated inſtance from antiquity. Socrates was certainly the wiſeſt and the beſt man of all the heathens, whoſe characters have been tranſmitted to us. His behaviour was ſuch as not only deſerved, but ſeemed fit to command the eſteem and veneration of all who knew him; yet was this worthy man ſucceſsfully turned into ridicule by a perſon whoſe writings,

which have come down to us, are to the laſt degree mean and contemptible. Nor was the effect merely tranſient; for, in the opinion of many, this contempt paved the way for the hatred which his enemies ſoon raiſed againſt him, and which brought him to his death.

I proceed now, in the laſt place, to make ſome improvement of what has been ſaid; and I think I can diſcover, in the aſpect of the audience, that you already ſuppoſe I have been led to the choice of this ſubject, by the late atrocious and flagrant offence committed in the near neighbourhood of where I now ſtand; and which hath affected every thinking and well-diſpoſed perſon in the place, with a mixture of indignation and concern. That this is indeed the caſe, I have no intention either to deny or conceal. Many I know are of opinion, that fidelity to my charge calls for ſomething of this nature on the preſent occaſion; if to others the particular diſcuſſion and application of this ſubject ſhould need any apology, there are two things for which I hope to have the teſtimony of all my ordinary hearers. 1. That I have never omitted to mention, with all freedom and plainneſs, the ſins and duties of every rank and claſs of men, as the ſubject led to it, or the occaſion ſeemed to require it. 2. That in doing this I have generally avoided bringing in particular accidents that have fallen out in the place; being much of opinion, that the leſs perſonal any thing of that nature is, it is the more likely to be uſeful. But though I continue in the ſame opinion in general, there are ſome things ſo flagrant and atrocious in their nature, ſo dangerous and hurtful in their effects,

that bare ſilence concerning them would carry in it an imputation of unfaithfulneſs or partiality in a miniſter of Chriſt. And as in the preſent caſe the ſcandal ſeems loudly to call for ſome public notice of it, ſo it is impoſſible to make the perſons more known than they are already by their own folly. If it could make them any more aſhamed, it would be an unſpeakable benefit both to the public and themſelves.

With a view therefore to the ſcandal juſt now hinted at, ſuffer me to apply the truths above illuſtrated, by giving you ſome advice and direction under the three following characters, one or more of which will include every perſon who now hears me.

1. To thoſe who are young; in that lovely, precious, dangerous ſeaſon of life, of all others the fitteſt for learning what is good, and unhappily prone to learn or imitate what is evil. My dear children, this is not the firſt of many times I have addreſſed inſtruction particularly to you, and I pray that God may open your hearts to receive it. Let me beſeech you, firſt of all, to learn this important leſſon, to diſtruſt yourſelves; be ſenſible of your inexperience, and be perſuaded of your danger from the admonitions of others. The greateſt evidence you can give of real knowledge, is to be ſenſible of your ignorance; and of true wiſdom, to be willing to learn. The ſolicitude and concern of your parents or other relations to preſerve you from the deſtructive paths of vice, is from their certain knowledge of what you are now unwilling to believe. Above all things, ſhun, as the peſtilence, the ſociety of profane ſcorners.

Loſt to all ſenſe of piety, ſeared in their conſciences, and enſlaved to their luſts, they will do all in their power to deſtroy a riſing ſenſe of religion in your minds: "While they promiſe you liberty, they themſelves are the ſervants of corruption." Think upon eternity approaching: no man can foreſee or foretel to you now, whether your time on earth ſhall be long or ſhort; whether you ſhall have much proſperity or many trials in the preſent world; but as the bleſſing of God is the beſt ingredient in all temporal mercies, ſo being at peace with him is the beſt ſupport under ſuffering, and the only preparation for death.

But as all the deluſive arguments in favour of ſin are drawn from this preſent life, ſuffer me to plead the cauſe of piety and truth in this reſpect. Be aſſured that true religion is the way to health, peace, opulence and public eſteem. Hear the wiſeſt of mere men: Prov. iii. 16, 17. "Length of days is in wiſdom's right hand, and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleaſantneſs, and all her paths are peace." Do not look only on thoſe libertines who are in the beginning or middle of their courſe, whoſe ſpirits are lively, and their vigour yet unimpaired; look on the few older practitioners. Theſe were the good fellows and ſocial ſpirits of a former period. Their companions were cut off in the middle of their days, and they remain as beacons for your inſtruction and warning. Do you ſee them ſullen in their deportment, mean in their attire, and deſpiſed by the world itſelf; their faces bloated with intemperance, and their miſerable offspring pale with hunger or crippled by neglect?

theſe are the terrible fruits of midnight rioting. They were once as merry in their cups, as ready with their jeſts, and as great deſpiſers of Sabbaths and ſermons, of whining and praying, as any of their more ſprightly ſucceſſors, who are in the high road to the ſame deſpicable end.

My dear friends, when you perceive any one ſtirring up your averſion to parental authority, and teaching you to deſpiſe the troubleſome admonitions of miniſters and mothers, know that he is enticing you to the ruin of ſoul, body and eſtate. Hear again the wiſe man, or rather the Spirit of God ſpeaking by him: Prov. xxiii. 19, &c. "Hear then, my ſon, and be wiſe, and guide thine heart in the way: be not amongſt wine-bibbers, amongſt riotous eaters of fleſh; for the drunkard and the glutton ſhall come to poverty, and drowſineſs ſhall clothe a man with rags. Hearken unto thy father that begat thee, and deſpiſe not thy mother when ſhe is old." Prov. xxx. 17. "The eye that mocketh at his father, and deſpiſeth to obey his mother, the ravens of the valley ſhall pick it out, and the young eagles ſhall eat it."

Do you indeed think that any of your looſe companions, with all their profeſſions of friendſhip and attachment, have the ſame concern for your true intereſt that a parent has, or the ſame judgment to diſcern it? You may eſteem it as a favour when you are aſſiſted in the indulgence of your pleaſures, and your irregular courſes are concealed from the knowledge of your relations, but it is in truth the greateſt injury that can poſſibly be done you. It is

often diſtreſſing to thoſe of riper years and more experience, to obſerve how difficult it is to perſuade young perſons of eaſy tempers and warm affections, of the danger of aſſociating with profligates. We reckon it hard that you will not believe that they are worthleſs upon our teſtimony, but muſt learn it from your own fatal experience. Believe it, there is no true friendſhip but what is founded on the principles of piety and virtue; and if you confide in thoſe of a different character, you will, ſooner or later, be rewarded with treachery and falſehood; and indeed the ſooner the better, for their friendſhip is infinitely more hurtful than any effects of their diſpleaſure. Again, therefore, let me beſeech the younger part of my audience, who have not yet themſelves thrown off all regard to decency, to give up all friendſhip with, and avoid the ſociety of thoſe who have. It is uſually a hard ſacrifice I confeſs, but neceſſary to your preſervation from the moſt deſtructive courſes. What ſignifies the ſcorn or reſentment of a few hardened wretches, compared to the peace of your own minds, the heart-felt pleaſure you will give to every real friend, your comfort and happineſs in this life, and the well-grounded hope of a bleſſed immortality?

2. Let me ſhortly addreſs myſelf to parents, or others who are intruſted with the education of youth. And O that I could make you ſenſible of the importance and difficulty of your charge! There are many directions which might be given you with reſpect to education in general, but I chuſe to confine my thoughts at preſent to what is ſuggeſted by the occaſion and ſubject of this diſcourſe. Let it

therefore be your care to preſerve your children, as much as poſſible, from the company and converſation of profane perſons, eſpecially thoſe who are tainted with infidelity; and who, as its natural conſequence, treat the exerciſes of piety with contempt and ſcorn. To ſuffer this, when you can hinder it, is treating their ſouls in the ſame manner as you would do their bodies, if you placed doſes of ſweetened poiſon in every corner of the houſe. You will daily perceive how children are formed by imitation, in their temper and manners; they muſt bear a reſemblance to thoſe from whom they receive their firſt impreſſions. But if this is the caſe in general, how much more muſt they embrace the principles, and imitate the practice of their companions in pleaſure!

This caution is ſo neceſſary, that where counſel and intreaty are not ſufficient to procure compliance, authority ought to be interpoſed. Mere authority indeed will be very ineffectual, and therefore I muſt particularly recommend to you an early attention to your children's opinion and judgment. They ſoon form a judgment, and will give early marks of approbation and averſion of perſons and characters. Do your utmoſt to make them eſteem religion, as the greateſt happineſs to every perſon, and the moſt amiable part of every character. Make them ſenſible, from your conduct, that it is not only your ſincere choice but greateſt delight. It is very fatal to them when they are led to look upon it as a burden and conſtraint. Habituate them early to conſider all other qualities as good for nothing, when piety is wanting, and a perſon of a truly Chriſtian

converſation as worthy of the higheſt eſteem, whatever be his ſtation or circumſtances in other reſpects. Remember it makes a part of the character of a good man, as drawn by the Pſalmiſt David, Pſal. xv. 4. "In whoſe eyes a vile perſon is deſpiſed, but he honoureth them that fear the Lord." I am perſuaded that many who truly fear God themſelves, are inadvertently guilty of a great miſtake in this particular; they diſcover unhappily too much of their admiration or envy of the natural advantages of others, independent of their moral character. Dreſs, furniture and wealth, are looked upon as diſtinguiſhing advantages, and children are often ſuffered to indulge themſelves in mockery and deriſion, even where deformity, poverty, aukwardneſs, and things perfectly innocent in themſelves, are the only objects of their ſcorn. Intellectual abilities alſo, comprehenſion of mind, and ſprightlineſs of fancy, are commonly much the objects of eſteem; and young perſons are inſenſibly led to admire theſe natural qualities, without at all conſidering to what purpoſes they are applied. This muſt neceſſarily have a fatal effect; and therefore parents ſhould endeavour, as much as poſſible, to preſerve upon their own minds, and inſpire their children with an eſteem of true piety, and a horror and averſion at a vicious character, whatever advantage may happen to accompany it.

If due care is taken betimes in this reſpect, I am perſuaded it will, in a great meaſure, prevent the danger ariſing from the example or ſolicitation of the patrons of impiety. Their chief ſucceſs depends on their real characters lying concealed, till it is ſafe

and proper to avow it. They inſtil the principles of irreligion as a wiſe man would do the moſt ſacred truths, by little and little, as their diſciples are able to bear them, and always do it under the diſguiſe of pleaſure. There is nothing more different than the converſation and carriage of a libertine in the preſence of thoſe of whom he ſtands in awe, and among his ſelect companions; and even theſe laſt are but gradually initiated into the concluding and horrid myſteries of profanity and blaſphemy. Young minds therefore ſhould be early formed to ſuch a taſte, as to look for piety and virtue before they will give their approbation or affection to any human accompliſhments. Were this the caſe, they would not be ſo often betrayed by ſpecious appearances, and drawn in by degrees, firſt to ſuffer, then to imitate, and at laſt to delight in the moſt vicious practices.

While I am giving you theſe directions, I cannot help obſerving, that you may ſee the great neceſſity of wiſdom and prudence in the religious education of children. Apply yourſelves to it with diligence. It is an extenſive and difficult, but at the ſame time a noble, uſeful, delightful ſtudy. "And if any man lack wiſdom, let him aſk of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not."

I ſhall now cloſe this diſcourſe with a few words to profeſſing Chriſtians in general.

My brethren, when vice rears up its head, and appears with inſolence and boldneſs, as it will certainly affect every good man with concern, ſo it is of great importance what treatment it meets with from the public. If it paſſes without notice, we

may conclude that corruption hath deeply infected the whole maſs. If men are afraid or aſhamed to expreſs their indignation at it, we may conclude the conſpiracy is formidable, and that the intereſt of truth and piety is greatly on the decline. There are many who, in caſes of groſs ſcandal, rather chuſe to keep themſelves at eaſe by forbearance and indulgence to the guilty, than run the hazard of provoking their reſentment by an honeſt declaration of their real ſentiments. Nor is it ſeldom to be obſerved, that the very perſons who do leaſt in their own ſphere for ſtemming the tide of profanity, are the firſt and loudeſt in complaining of the negligence of magiſtrates or paſtors in inflicting public puniſhments or cenſures.

Whilſt therefore I am endeavouring, in ſome meaſure, to diſcharge my own duty, I muſt alſo put you in mind of yours. It is evidently the duty of all who profeſs to fear God, to abſtain from the ſociety of thoſe who are groſsly profane, without diſcovering any ſenſe of penitence or ſorrow. The truth is, I ought rather to make this a mark of true religion, and affirm that all good men will do ſo, than inform them that they ſhould. There muſt be a likeneſs of diſpoſition among familiar friends. Had you that abhorrence of impiety that you ought to have, you would count the ſociety of impious perſons a ſtain and reproach to your own characters. Of this I am able to give a very ſtrong, and at the ſame time a plain and familiar proof. Were any perſon known to be guilty of theft and diſhoneſty, or any fault that is odious and diſgraceful in the world, every one would reckon his intimate compa-

nions almoſt, if not to the ſame degree, abandoned as himſelf. The ſame thing will certainly hold as to profanity or licentiouſneſs, though indeed it carries in it a melancholy proof, that ſins againſt piety or purity are far from being held in the ſame abhorrence as what endangers our ſubſtance or temporal intereſt. I muſt however here beg of you to attend to a ſingular and very ſtrong paſſage of the epiſtle to the Romans. The apoſtle Paul cloſes his deſcription of the profane world in the following terms: Rom. ii. 32. "Who knowing the judgment of God, (that they which commit ſuch things are worthy of death) not only do the ſame, but have pleaſure in them that do them." I have looked into the original, and find the words juſtly tranſlated; and you ſee, from the conſtruction of the ſentence, the apoſtle repreſents having pleaſure in ſenſual and wicked men, as implying a depravity of character ſuperior even to that of ſenſuality itſelf.

But as aſſociating with the profane is a mark of profanity, ſo every degree of countenance given to them, by perſons of entire character, is a ſenſible injury to the public. It ſerves to put honour upon vice, and in part to deliver it from that juſt reproach which ought to be the puniſhment of the guilty, and a warning to others not to tread in their ſteps. I have on ſeveral occaſions obſerved, that the preſent period or ſtate of things in this place and congregation demands the greateſt concern for the public intereſt of religion. Growing in numbers, and growing I hope in wealth, as the effect of your own and your fathers induſtry, you are in danger of the introduction of a worldly ſpirit by the riſing genera-

tion. This every good man ought, with the utmoſt prudence and reſolution, to oppoſe; particularly by doing all in his power to preſerve the honour and reſpect due to true religion, and treating with contempt every open enemy to that important intereſt. I ſincerely wiſh you improved, and poſſeſſed of every accompliſhment that is truly valuable; but beware of that falſe politeneſs which conſiſts in little elſe than an oppoſition to religion and ſobriety. And indeed I am afraid we ſhall not ſoon attain to any other, at leaſt not by the help of thoſe, who, as they ſet religion at defiance, ſo are equally ſtrangers to that elegance and ſenſe of decency which diſtinguiſhes perſons of higher rank.

The late riotous meeting was without doubt the moſt audacious thing of the kind that ever was attempted in this place, and therefore calls for an open and vigorous teſtimony againſt it, by every perſon in his ſphere. Regard for the glory of God, love to the ſouls of men, and ſolicitude for the riſing generation, conſpire in requiring you to exert yourſelves in ſuch a cauſe; and ſhall I not add, compaſſion to the perſons themſelves. Their worſt enemies are thoſe who treat them with indulgence, ſo long as they continue to juſtify or to palliate their offence. Nothing ſerves to harden ſinners more, than when no notice is taken of their crimes, and they find themſelves juſt as generally, and as well received as if they had done no evil. On the other hand, when they perceive the deep concern of others on their account, it is an excellent mean of bringing them to ſerious reflection, and inducing them to tremble at themſelves. Wherefore, my beloved

hearers, let me beſeech you to preſerve your horror of ſin, notwithſtanding the boldneſs of ſinners. Do every thing in your power to reclaim the offenders. Be earneſt in your ſupplications to almighty God, that he would ſnatch them as brands from the burning, and raiſe them up as trophies of his victorious grace. But while they continue in their enmity to God, forget not, on your own account, the apoſtolic counſel, "Have no fellowſhip with the unfruitful works of darkneſs, but rather reprove them."

SERMON XX.

MINISTERIAL CHARACTER AND DUTY.

2 Cor. iv. 13.

We alſo believe, and therefore ſpeak.

TO underſtand what ought to be the character, and what principles ſhould animate the conduct of a miniſter of the goſpel, cannot be without profit, even to a private Chriſtian. It will teach him whom to prefer, when he is called in providence to make a choice. It will teach him to hold ſuch in reputation for their office ſake, and to improve the privilege of a regular goſpel miniſtry, if he himſelf is favoured with it. And I think it muſt incline him to make daily ſupplication to the Lord of the harveſt, to ſend forth faithful labourers into his harveſt.

But though there were no ſuch general advantage to be derived from it, my particular charge, and the very aſpect of this audience, would eaſily juſtify me in making this for once the immediate ſubject of diſcourſe.

Now, if we would know the character of a faithful miniſter, we cannot better or more immediately reach our purpoſe, than by looking into the character, and obſerving the conduct and ſprings of action of the apoſtles of our Lord, who received their commiſſions immediately from himſelf, and were not only the firſt, but the beſt and moſt ſucceſsful miniſters that ever were employed in the church of Chriſt.

The apoſtle Paul, whoſe call was ſo ſingular, and whoſe labours were ſo diſtinguiſhed, has, in his epiſtles to the ſeveral churches planted or watered by him, given us a great light into the chief aims he had in the exerciſe of the miniſtry. In this chapter and the preceding part of this epiſtle, he ſhews the Corinthians with what viſible faithfulneſs and ſincerity he had acted, and what diligence he had uſed iu promoting their eternal happineſs.

To ſave time I forbear going through the connection of his diſcourſe, and only obſerve, that in the words of our text he ſhews what kept him faithful, and influenced him to ſo much diligence in the work to which he was called, by alluding to an expreſſion in the 116th Pſalm. It is written, "I have believed, therefore have I ſpoken. We alſo believe, and therefore ſpeak." In this he intimates, that our inward perſuaſion of the great truths of the everlaſting goſpel, could not but have a powerful influence upon him and others to preſs the important meſſage, and watch over the ſouls of thoſe committed to their charge.

In diſcourſing further at this time, I intend to confine myſelf to this ſingle truth, which may be

eaſily deduced from the text: That one of the moſt eſſentially neceſſary, and the moſt extenſively uſeful qualifications of a good miniſter is, that he be a good man, that he have a firm belief of that goſpel he is called to preach, and a lively ſenſe of religion upon his own heart. After I ſhall have explained and confirmed this obſervation, I will conclude with ſome practical reflections.

Though I have mentioned real religion as one of the moſt eſſentially neceſſary qualifications, I am not ignorant, that taking the words in a ſtrict ſenſe, gifts are more neceſſary to the being of a miniſtry than even grace itſelf. To make the efficacy of the ordinances to depend upon the inward ſtate of the adminiſtrator, is a popiſh error, and is expreſsly guarded againſt by the Aſſembly of Divines in our Shorter Catechiſm, in the following words: "The ſacraments," and it is equally true of every other ordinance, "become effectual to ſalvation, not from any virtue in them, or in him that doth adminiſter them, but only by the bleſſing of Chriſt, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them."

But ſome degree of capacity is evidently neceſſary in the moſt abſolnte ſenſe. A man who is altogether void of knowledge and utterance, or who is deaf and dumb, may be a ſaint, but cannot be a miniſter. This conceſſion, however, takes nothing from the force of the obſervation, that real religion is of the greateſt importance, and moſt abſolutely neceſſary to the faithful diſcharge of a miniſter's ſacred truſt. That I may ſet this in as clear and ſtrong a light as I am able, let me intreat your attention to the following obſervations.

I. Real religion in a miniſter will make him knowing and able for his work. It is neceſſary for any one who intends himſelf for the office of the miniſtry, by diligent ſtudy, and the uſe of thoſe means with which God in his providence hath furniſhed him, to improve his underſtanding, and acquire a ſtock of knowledge, that he may be a workman that needeth not to be aſhamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. In this he can have no ſuch incitement as concern for his Maſter's glory. Nay, he that is truly religious is taught of God, the beſt of maſters, and will have ſome of his moſt profitable leſſons from his own experience.

Let me the rather intreat your attention to this, that thoſe who are moſt apt to diſparage piety, are alſo apt to ſpeak in terms of high approbation on the ſubject of literature and ſcience. Obſerve, therefore, that true religion ſerves both to give a man that knowledge which is neceſſary to a miniſter, and to direct and turn into its proper channel the knowledge which he may otherwiſe acquire. It is an approved maxim in every ſcience, that practical and experimental knowledge far exceeds that which is merely ſpeculative; at leaſt, though the laſt may make the prettieſt ſhow, the firſt is by much to be preferred for uſe. Any wiſe man, if he was to go a dangerous voyage, would readily prefer as his pilot one who had much experience, and had ſailed often that way himſelf, to one who had ſtudied navigation in the moſt perfect manner aſhore. So, my brethren, every man who regards his ſoul would chuſe for his ſpiritual guide one who appears to have

the wiſdom to ſave his own, and would expect by him to be beſt directed how to avoid the rocks and ſhelves in his paſſage through this dangerous and tempeſtuous ocean of life.

But if this maxim holds true in other ſciences, it holds yet more ſtrongly in religion, which cannot be truly known unleſs it be felt. There is an inſeparable connection between faith and practice, truth and duty; and therefore he that is a ſtranger to the one, is ignorant of the other. I am not inſenſible that a bad man may eſpouſe, and plead for a great part of the ſyſtem of divine truth, but as he cannot cordially embrace it, ſo I am inclined to think that he never truly underſtands it. The apoſtle Paul declares, that it is only by the Spirit of God, which is given to every real Chriſtian, and more eſpecially to every faithful miniſter, that a man is enabled to treat rightly of divine things. "Now we have received, not the ſpirit of the world, but the ſpirit which is of God, that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God; which things we ſpeak, not in the words which man's wiſdom teacheth, but which the Holy Ghoſt teacheth, comparing ſpiritual things with ſpiritual. But the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God, for they are fooliſhneſs unto him, neither can he know them, for they are ſpiritually diſcerned." As the real Chriſtian from that character is beſt diſpoſed to ſeek after, ſo he is by the ſame means beſt fitted to improve and apply his knowledge of ſpiritual things. This will appear if we conſider what ought to be the great work of a miniſter. He hath to do chiefly with the hearts and conſciences of his people. His buſineſs

is to convince the ungodly, to awaken the ſecure, to enlighten the ignorant, to direct and ſtrengthen the weak in the faith, and in general, as a wiſe phyſician, to adminiſter the medicine proper to the various conditions and diſorders of his hearers. Now it muſt at firſt ſight appear, that he who is a ſtranger to the power of godlineſs, and knows nothing of the ſpiritual life himſelf, muſt be utterly unfit for diſcerning how it thrives, or aſſiſting and promoting it in others. That man muſt ſurely be moſt powerful in ſearching, and moſt ſkilful in guiding the conſciences of others, who has been accuſtomed to examine and direct his own.

I only farther obſerve upon this particular, that true religion will purify, and direct into its proper channel, the knowledge he may otherwiſe acquire. It is a great miſtake to think ſound learning is an enemy to religion, and to ſuppoſe that an ignorant miniſtry is the beſt or ſafeſt. There is no branch of human knowledge of which a divine may not be the better, or which a good man will not improve to the glory of God and the good of others, though ſome of them are more important than others; and it is neceſſary to give to any of them only ſuch proportion of our time as is conſiſtent with our great and principal aim. Now true religion is the great preſervative againſt miſtake or abuſe of any kind on this ſubject. A bad man is apt to ſtudy merely to gratify his own fancy; and there is a falſe luxury and delicacy in feeding the mind as well as the body. A bad man is alſo exceedingly prone to intellectual pride and ſelf-ſufficiency, than which there is not a vice more dangerous in itſelf, or more con-

trary to the character of a miniſter of the New Teſtament. But he who is ſanctified by divine grace, as he has every motive to diligence in acquiring knowledge, ſo the ſingle purpoſe to which he will wiſh to apply it is to ſerve God in the goſpel of his Son.

II. Real religion in a miniſter will make him happy and cheerful, ready and willing to do his duty. There is a great difference between the prompt and ſpeedy obedience of a ſervant who loves his maſter and his work, and the reluctant labour of him who only deceives him that he may eat of his bread. A truly pious man undertakes the office of the miniſtry from love to God, with a view to promote his glory, and what he hath counted his intereſt in the world, viz. the welfare of the ſouls of men. An unholy miniſter undertakes this employment only as a trade to earn by, and has it at leaſt as his higheſt aim to promote his own worldly advantage. It is eaſy to ſee in what a different manner theſe different perſons will act, and in what different light they will view the ſacred duties of their function. He who truly believes the goſpel, and loves its Author, will reckon it his higheſt honour when he is called to recommend it to the belief of others. He will be apt to teach, and will find a pleaſure in carrying his meſſage, beſides the reward he expects from him who employs him, and will undergo with cheerfulneſs every fatigue he is ſubjected to in the execution of his office. On the other hand, he who is actuated by a contrary principle, though he is obliged, that he may raiſe his wages, in ſome ſort to do his duty, yet how heavily muſt

it go on, how tedious and burdenſome muſt it be, both in preparation and performance! He will count his ſervice at the altar, and his work among his people, as a toil and drudgery, and reckon all that redeemed time that he can ſave for himſelf from the duties of his office.

Perhaps it may be thought that there lies a ſtrong objection againſt this obſervation from experience, as it appears that ſuch miniſters as have leaſt of religion commonly go moſt lightly under the charge, and are far from feeling any burden in what is committed to them; whereas the moſt pious and faithful miniſters ſeem to have a weight upon their ſpirits, and ſuch a concern for the ſalvation of their people, as cannot but take much from their cheerfulneſs in the work to which they are called. In anſwer to this, obſerve, that an unfaithful miniſter is not eaſy and cheerful becauſe his work is agreeable to him, but becauſe he takes as little of it as may be, and ſeeks his pleaſure more than his duty. Certain it is, that the work of the miniſtry muſt be irkſome and uneaſy to him that believes not, except ſo far as he makes it ſubſervient to ambition, and diſplays his own talents when he ſhould be feeding his people's ſouls. This, I confeſs, which the apoſtle juſtly calls preaching ourſelves, may be abundantly gratifying to the moſt corrupt heart. On the other hand, that concern for his people which is upon the heart of every faithful paſtor, is far from being inconſiſtent with the moſt ſolid peace and deſireable pleaſure, ariſing from the diſcharge of his duty. It is like the exerciſe of pity and compaſſion

to the diſtreſſed in him who is acting for their relief, which, though in ſome ſenſe painful, is yet accompanied with the approbation of God and conſcience, as flowing from a rightly diſpoſed mind, and therefore to be cheriſhed and cultivated rather than ſuppreſſed. There is a time for every good man to mourn, and a time to rejoice, and perhaps the one is even more ſalutary than the other; for we are told, that God will appoint unto them that mourn in Sion, "to give unto them beauty for aſhes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praiſe for the ſpirit of heavineſs."

III. Real religion in a miniſter will make him faithful and impartial in the diſcharge of his truſt. The God in whoſe preſence we ſtand, and in whoſe name we ſpeak, is no reſpecter of perſons, and neither ſhould we be in doing his work. There is commonly a great variety of perſons, of different ſtations and of different characters, committed to the inſpection of a miniſter; the pleaſing or diſpleaſing of whom has a conſiderable influence on his worldly eaſe and intereſt. This is a great temptation to be unfaithful, and often leads to ſpeak unto them *ſmooth things*, and *propheſy deceit*; or at leaſt not to deal with all that freedom and impartiality that his duty to God requires. In every unregenerate man, worldly intereſt in one ſhape or another, either vanity or gain, is the ſupreme motive of action; and therefore, as moſt men are impatient of reproof, it cannot be ſuppoſed that an unſanctified miniſter will venture to provoke their diſpleaſure, or to gall them with unacceptable truths. The favour of the great or the applauſe of the multitude, he certainly will

ſeek more than the edification of any. On the other hand, he who truly fears God, and believes what he teaches, will act with faithfulneſs and boldneſs. He will remember, that if he ſeeks to pleaſe men, he cannot be the ſervant of Chriſt. He will therefore no farther obtain, and indeed no farther wiſh to obtain their favour, than as a diligent diſcharge of his duty approves him to their conſciences in the ſight of God, or forces the approbation of the impartial, notwithſtanding the reſentment of particular offenders. It is only the fear of God can deliver us from the fear of man. I do not pretend that all who fear God are wholly delivered from it, but ſurely bad men muſt be far more under the government of this ſinful principle. The one may fail occaſionally, the other is corrupted wholly. There are two reaſons which incline me particularly to inſiſt on that faithfulneſs which can only flow from true piety.

1. That preaching, in order to be uſeful, muſt be very particular and cloſe in the application. General truths and abſtract reaſoning have little or no influence upon the hearers, as the ignorant cannot, and the wiſe will not apply them to themſelves.

2. The other reaſon is, that private admonition and perſonal reproof are a great part of a miniſter's duty, and a duty that cannot be performed by any man who hath not a ſteady regard to the preſence and command of that God who hath ſet him to watch for the ſouls of his people, as one that muſt give an account.

IV. Real religion in a miniſter will make him active and laborious in his work. Diligence is ab-

ſolutely neceſſary to the right diſcharge of the paſtoral duties, whether public or private. It requires no ſmall attention and labour to ſeek out fit and acceptable words, as the preacher expreſſes it, to ſtir up the attention of the inconſiderate, to awaken ſecure, and convince obſtinate ſinners, to unmaſk the covered hearts of hypocrites, to ſet right the erring, and encourage the fearful. An unbelieving miniſter muſt be careleſs and ſlothful. As he is unconcerned about the ſucceſs of his work, he cannot have any great concern about the manner of performance. But he who believes the unſpeakable importance of what he is employed about, both to himſelf and to his people, cannot fail to be diligent. He knows that he himſelf muſt anſwer to God for the care he has taken of the ſouls committed to his charge, and that if he does not faithfully warn the wicked to turn from their ways, their blood will be required at his hand.

O, my brethren, what a ſtriking conſideration is this, to ſuppoſe ourſelves interrogated by the ſupreme Judge concerning every ſinner under our charge! Did you earneſtly warn this unhappy ſoul, by earneſt exhortations in public, and by ſerious affectionate expoſtulations in private, to conſider his ways? It is an eaſy thing, by a partial or curſory performance of our duty, to ſcreen ourſelves from the cenſure of our fellow men, but to ſtand at the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, and anſwer there for our diligence, is a more awful trial.

Will not alſo a concern for his people's intereſt animate a pious miniſter to diligence? If he is truly pious, as he loves God he loves his brother alſo.

The apoſtle Paul ſays, "Knowing therefore the terror of the Lord, we perſuade men." If a man in good earneſt believes that everlaſting miſery muſt be the portion of all who die in an unrenewed ſtate, what pains will he not take to prevent ſinners from going to that place of torment!

One who could ſee a fellow-creature, in the rage of a fever, ruſhing to the brink of a precipice, and not reſtrain him, would fall under laſting infamy. Muſt not the ſame compaſſion move the heart of a ſerious perſon, who ſees his fellow-ſinners going blindfold to the pit of perdition?

It is their not believing theſe things that makes them ſo fearleſs in ſinning: if you truly believe them, will you not make an effort to alarm them? There are no motives like theſe to diligence—he that believes will certainly ſpeak.

V. In the laſt place, Real religion will make a miniſter ſucceſsful in his work. This it does, both as it fits him for doing his duty to his people, which has been illuſtrated above, and as it adds to his precepts the force of his example. Firſt, it makes him ſucceſsful as it fits him for his duty. It is true indeed, that God only can give the bleſſing upon a miniſter's labours, and that he can ſave by many or by few, by the weakeſt as well as by the ableſt inſtrument; yet we ſee from experience, that in all ordinary caſes he proportions the ſucceſs to the propriety or ſufficiency of the means. Neither is there any ſurer mark that God intends effectual benefit to any part of the world or the church, than when he raiſes and commiſſions men eminently qualified to plead his cauſe. Therefore real piety, even in this

reſpect, contributes to a miniſter's ſucceſs. If diligence in all other things produces ſucceſs, it muſt be ſo alſo in the miniſtry. If he that lays out his ground with the greateſt judgment, prepares and dreſſes it with the greateſt care, has the moſt plentiful crop; if the ſhepherd that waits moſt diligently upon his flock, feeds them in the beſt paſture, and leads them to the ſafeſt ſhelter, has the moſt increaſe, then that miniſter who does his duty moſt wiſely and moſt powerfully, will alſo ſee moſt of the fruit of his labours.

But real and unaffected, yet viſible ſerioufneſs, has alſo its own proper additional influence on a miniſter's ſucceſs. An apparent and viſible impreſſion upon the ſpeaker's mind of what he ſays, gives it an inexpreſſible weight with the hearers. There is a piercing heat, a penetrating force in that which flows from the heart, which diſtinguiſhes it not only from the coldneſs of indifference, but alſo from the falſe fire of enthuſiaſm or vain glory. Beſides all this, the example of a pious miniſter is a conſtant inſtruction to his people. It ratifies his doctrine, while he not only charges them to do what he ſays, but to be what he is. This will receive much illuſtration from its contrary.

A miniſter who has a careleſs untender walk, defeats, by his life, the intent of his preaching. Though in reaſon it cannot juſtify any one in diſobeying wholeſome inſtructions, that the inſtructor deſpiſes them himſelf, yet it is one of the moſt common excuſes men make for themſelves, and few excuſes ſeem to ſet their conſciences more at eaſe. Looſe and careleſs perſons think themſelves quite

at liberty to deſpiſe the reproofs of their paſtor, if, while he teaches others, he teaches not himſelf.

Nay, not only is it thus with the profane, but even thoſe who have the greateſt regard for religion, are not ſo much affected with the ſame truths when ſpoken by one they think indifferent about them, as when ſpoken by one who ſeems to feel what he ſpeaks, and who lives as he teaches.

Experience greatly confirms the whole of this reaſoning; for wherever an eminently pious miniſter has lived and laboured long, there is commonly to be found the moſt knowing, ſerious, ſober-minded, and judicious people; nay, the very memory of ſuch a miniſter is often long continued after he is gone, and his example is propoſed by his hearers to their children's children.

From all theſe conſiderations I conclude, that the moſt important qualification of a good miniſter is to be a *believing preacher;* and that if he ſaves his own ſoul, he will be the probable mean of ſaving them that hear him.

I proceed now to make ſome improvement of the ſubject.

Reverend Fathers and Brethren,

As we would wiſh our people to do, let us take heed how we hear, and make a faithful application to ourſelves of what hath been ſaid upon the ſubject. Let it engage us to a ſerious examination of ourſelves, leſt while we preach the goſpel to others we ourſelves ſhould be reprobates. This ought to be the ſubject of our frequent and ſerious thoughts, for ſeveral reaſons. We are in danger of thinking

ourſelves too eaſily ſafe, by comparing that outward regularity to which our office itſelf, even from ſecular motives, obliges us, with the licentious extravagance of profane ſinners. We are in danger of miſtaking our frequent thinking and ſpeaking of the things of God, in the way of our calling, for an evidence of true religion in ourſelves. We may alſo perhaps miſtake thoſe gifts with which God hath furniſhed us for the benefit of his own people, as the fruits of the Spirit, and of gracious diſpoſitions in our hearts. A miniſter is as much liable to ſelf-deceit as others, and in ſome reſpects more ſo. We have therefore much need often to make trial of our ſtate, as well as to give all diligence to make our calling and election ſure.

But let us beware of imagining that this diſcourſe is only applicable to ſuch as have no real faith in Chriſt. God forbid that there were any miniſter among us a complete unbeliever, counting the goſpel a fable. But faith, and every other gracious diſpoſition grafted upon it, are capable of many degrees of improvement and ſtrength; and in proportion to the ſtrength of our faith, and the impreſſion we have of divine things, will be our diligence, and conſequently our ſucceſs in the work of the miniſtry. Let us therefore impreſs our minds with a more and more lively ſenſe of the important truths which we teach and hear. Let us not ſtarve ourſelves while we are feeding others; but ſtudy to arrive at a greater degree of love to God and delight in him, a greater conformity to his bleſſed image, in purity of heart and integrity of life. Let us, in a ſpecial manner, ſtudy to attain to more and more intimate com-

munion with God in ſecret, which is the ſign of our dependence upon him, and the very exerciſe of love to him, which is the mean of conſtancy, and the ſource of joy in religion.

Above all, let us ſet our affections upon the things that are above, where our Redeemer ſits at his Father's right hand. As our profeſſion is to be pilgrims and ſtrangers in the earth, to live by faith and not by ſight, let us ſtudy to raiſe our hopes of, and deſire after the heavenly inheritance. By this we ſhall not only believe, but know and feel the value of true religion, which cannot fail to make us diligent in ſeeking the good of others.

O, my brethren, what reaſon have we to be inwardly aſhamed at the weakneſs of our faith and the coldneſs of our love, as they ſhow themſelves by our indifference in the duties of our office! We are often ready both to complain and wonder that our hearers are ſo little affected with the moſt awful conſiderations, that they can hear with indifference of everlaſting happineſs, and ſit without fear under the denunciations of eternal wrath; that we cannot perſuade them it is of importance to think what ſhall become of them for ever. But is it not alſo to be wondered at, that we ourſelves can often ſpeak of theſe things with ſo little emotion? Can we ever be ſufficiently affected with the danger of our hearers, when we conſider that we muſt either ſave them by convincing and converting them now, or deliver our own ſouls by witneſſing, juſtifying, and perhaps pleading for their condemnation at the laſt day! However plain and ſimple theſe truths are, of the

final judgment of miniſters and people, they are quite unfathomable in their meaning and importance to both. It is ſtrange that we can think of them without the deepeſt concern, or even ſpeak of them without tears.

Let us pray that the Lord would increaſe our faith, that believing we may ſpeak, and that our ſpeech may be with ſuch efficacy, by the bleſſing of God, as many ſinners may be thereby brought to everlaſting life; that we may approve ourſelves to him that ſent us; and that when Chriſt the chief Shepherd ſhall appear, we may receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

SERMON XXI.

THE SUCCESS OF THE GOSPEL ENTIRELY OF GOD.

1 Cor. iii. 5, 6, 7.

Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but miniſters by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man? I have planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increaſe. So then, neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increaſe.

My Brethren,

I Have been led to the choice of this ſubject by that diſpenſation of providence which, though contrary to all human probability, hath brought me to this new charge of preſiding over the inſtruction of youth in the liberal arts. I find alſo, that in the courſe of my attendance on it, I ſhall have frequent opportunities of preaching the glorious goſpel of the bleſſed God to you of this congregation and neighbourhood. Let me therefore beg your attention to the inſtructive paſſage which I have juſt now read,

ſhat both teachers and ſcholars, miniſters and hearers, may preſerve a juſt ſenſe of their relation to one another, and the common relation we all ſtand in to God. And particularly that in the diſcharge of our mutual duty of preaching and hearing, we may preſerve on our minds a deep ſenſe of our dependence on ſuperior ſtrength, and may look for a bleſſing from the Father of lights, from whom alone it can poſſibly flow.

The text of itſelf, and independent of its connection, is ſo full of uſeful matter, that I am unwilling to ſpend your time by a long deduction of the particular circumſtances of the church of Corinth which led the apoſtle to expreſs himſelf in the language contained in it. Let it ſuffice therefore to obſerve, that a ſpirit of pride and faction prevailed very much in that church, which had rent them into parties denominated from this or the other principal teacher who was or had been among them. Thus in the 12th verſe of the firſt chapter, "Now this I ſay, that every one of you ſaith, I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Chriſt." And in the verſe immediately preceding the text, "For while one ſaith I am of Paul, and another, I am of Apollos, are ye not carnal?" Poſſibly the converts from among the Jews counted themſelves the diſciples of Peter, and held him in the higheſt eſteem, while thoſe of the Gentiles ſupported the name and credit of the apoſtle Paul, who firſt planted the Chriſtian faith among the idolatrous heathens; and perhaps others, who were much addicted to learning and philoſophy, admired and extolled the eloquence of Apollos. And yet after all, perhaps the fierce and

unchriſtian contentions that prevailed in that church were not owing to their divided attachment to particular apoſtles, but to the ambitious and corrupt teachers which were among themſelves. If this was the caſe, the ap ſtle Paul only mentioned himſelf, Apollos and Cephas, by way of ſuppoſition, inſtead of naming the guilty heads of the contending parties, that the reproof being adminiſtered with ſo much prudence and delicacy, might be carried home with the greater evidence and force. This interpretation receives a good deal of countenance from what we find in chap. iv. 6. "And theſe things, brethren, I have in a figure transferred to myſelf and to Apollos for your ſake, that ye might learn in us not to think of men above that which is written, that no one of you be puffed up for one againſt another."

Such a diviſion and factious temper does infinite miſchief wherever it prevails. It proceeds from people being much under the power of a carnal mind, and exceedingly increaſes carnality by that envy, ſtrife, and diſſimulation which it always produces. But the chief way in which it hinders the ſucceſs of the goſpel is, by leading men into the fatal miſtake of ſeeking, or expecting to find in miniſters what can only be had in God, or aſcribing to inſtruments and ſervants what is due only to their Lord and Maſter. Would you perceive the greatneſs of this ſin? It is ſacrilegiouſly robbing God of his own honour and glory, in order to inveſt a weak ſinful creature with the ſacred ſpoils.

I only add one other preliminary remark. You

may ſee the perfect conſiſtency and propriety of the apoſtle's conduct, according to the different circumſtances in which he was engaged. For this purpoſe we muſt compare his expreſſions here with thoſe uſed by him when attempts were made to leſſen his character, and detract from the dignity of his office as an apoſtle of Chriſt. On theſe occaſions he ſhews, that he knows very well what belonged to his ſtation in the church, and is ſo far from ſpeaking of himſelf in affected ſtrains of humility, that he freely vindicates his own conduct, and magnifies the honourable truſt that was committed to him by his Saviour. Chap. ix. 1, 2. "Am I not an apoſtle? am I not free? have I not ſeen Jeſus Chriſt our Lord? are not ye my work in the Lord? If I be not an apoſtle to others, yet doubtleſs I am to you; for the ſeal of mine apoſtleſhip are ye in the Lord." Thus the apoſtle ſpeaks in vindication of his authority when unjuſtly attacked. But when the queſtion is changed, and ſome are diſpoſed to extol him or any other, to the prejudice of his Lord and Maſter, he changes his ſtyle too, and ſpeaks in the humbleſt manner of himſelf, and any thing he had contributed, or could contribute to the ſucceſs of the goſpel. As a faithful ſervant he could not endure that any ſhould put him in his Maſter's place, and rejected with indignation all that falſe honour which flowed only from the miſtakes and weakneſs of his fellow Chriſtians.

In this, as in many other inſtances, the occaſional directions given to the different Chriſtian churches in the early ages, carry the moſt important and uſeful admonitions to us who live in the latter days.

From the paſſage before us we learn, that miniſters ſhould conſider themſelves, and be conſidered by their people, as entirely ſubordinate to God, and expect aſſiſtance in their labours, and ſucceſs in their endeavours only from himſelf. What I further propoſe, in dependence on divine grace, is firſt to illuſtrate and ſupport the propoſition juſt now laid down, and then to make a practical improvement of the ſubject for your inſtruction and direction.

I. Firſt, then, I am to illuſtrate and ſupport this propoſition, That miniſters ought to conſider themſelves, and to be conſidered by their people, as entirely ſubordinate to God, and expect aſſiſtance in their labours, and ſucceſs in their endeavours only from himſelf. In the courſe of this illuſtration it is my intention, at once to point out the meaning and import of the propoſition, and to eſtabliſh its truth from Scripture and experience. For this purpoſe I beg your attention to the following obſervations.

1. The ſucceſs of the goſpel depends wholly upon God, and to him alone muſt the glory of it be aſcribed, as it is he who not only ſends and employs, but who furniſhes and qualifies all whom he employs for promoting his ſervice. He not only gives the commiſſion to undertake, but he imparts the ability to diſcharge the truſt. This truth is manifeſtly included in the apoſtle's words: "Who then is Paul, and who is Apollos, but miniſters by whom ye believed, even as the Lord gave to every man?" He conſiders himſelf and others only as miniſters; that is, as ſervants ſubject to the direction and authority

of Chriſt their Lord and Maſter, unto whom they are to be inſtrumental in carrying on the converſion of ſinners, and the edification and comfort of believers. This ſimilitude, however, of itſelf does not fully come up to the truth the apoſtle would inculcate. A man who is but a ſervant, and does every thing by the authority, and under the direction of his Maſter, may yet have real and juſt ground for valuing himſelf upon what he performs; in caſe, for inſtance, he is poſſeſſed of uncommon talents, and an extraordinary capacity to do his work to the beſt advantage. On this ſuppoſition he is a treaſurer to his Maſter, the ſucceſs of whoſe direction may in a great meaſure be aſcribed to the ſervant's ſkill and ability in the execution. But to exclude every pretence of this ſort, the apoſtle ſubjoins what brings the alluſion fully up to his purpoſe, "even as the Lord gave to every man." Miniſters are not only ſervants, but their very capacity and ability to ſerve God are received from himſelf, who divides to every man ſeverally as he will. From this it is evident, that the glory and honour of the whole work, and the ſucceſs of every particular ſervant employed in it, is entirely owing to Chriſt their great Lord and Maſter: 1 Cor. iv. 7. "For who maketh thee to differ from another? and what haſt thou that thou didſt not receive? now if thou didſt receive it, why doſt thou glory as if thou hadſt not received it?"

Let us, my brethren, conſider and dwell upon this truth a little, for it is full of inſtruction both to miniſters and people. That we may view it with the greater clearneſs and preciſion, let me obſerve, that there are two diſtinct kinds of qualities, which are

each in their place of great importance in the work of the miniſtry. (1.) The endowments of the mind, whether original and natural, or acquired by induſtry; theſe laſt being only the former improved and perfected by education and exerciſe. (2.) Holy diſpoſitions, which are of the utmoſt importance and neceſſity to turn the other into their proper channel, and to give them force and influence in the application. Now both theſe are equally and entirely the gift of God, the firſt being indeed in Scripture moſt commonly, in all their extent and diverſity, called gifts; but the others are the effect of the gracious and ſanctifying influence of the Holy Ghoſt.

(1.) All the endowments of mind which fit a man for common or ſpecial ſervice, are the gift of God. Whatever capacity of talents, whatever natural advantages of any kind miniſters enjoy, it is plain that they received them from God, and depend upon him for the continuance and uſe of them. He only endows them with knowledge and comprehenſion to underſtand his ſacred truths. He only endows them with the talent of ſpeaking well, and enables them to communicate their knowledge to others, in an agreeable and acceptable manner. Exod. iv. 11, 12. "And the Lord ſaid unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the ſeeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what thou ſhalt ſay." There is ſomething very noble, as well as inſtructive in theſe paſſages of Scripture, which repreſent even the ſkill of the tradeſmen to be employed in adorning the viſible ſanctuary, as the gift of God, and the inſpira-

tion of his Spirit. Exod. xxxi. 1, 2, 3, 4. "And the Lord ſpake unto Moſes, ſaying, See, I have called by name Bezaleel the ſon of Uri, the ſon of Hur, of the tribe of Judah; and I have filled him with the Spirit of God, in wiſdom, and in underſtanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanſhip, to deviſe cunning works, to work in gold, and in ſilver, and in braſs." And again, Exod. xxxvi. 1. "Then wrought Bezaleel and Aholiab, and every wiſe-hearted man, in whom the Lord put wiſdom and underſtanding, to know how to work all manner of work for the ſervice of the ſanctuary, according to all that the Lord had commanded."

Further, as it is the inſpiration of the Almighty that giveth underſtanding, both in a general and comparative view, ſo the improvement of natural parts by acquired learning is no leſs to be aſcribed to him. As he gives the diſpoſition and ability, ſo it is he who, by the courſe of his providence, furniſhes the means, and preſents the opportunity of making progreſs. Let human efforts be what they will, if God do not ſmile upon them they will infallibly be blaſted. An all-ſeeing and ſovereign God has determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of our habitation, and every perſon who will ſeriouſly reflect, may be ſenſible how all his purpoſes have been controuled and over-ruled by the inviſible direction of the great Diſpoſer of every event, who hath pointed out the paths in which he was to walk.

(2.) Let us alſo remember, that it is God who endows his miniſters with their brighteſt ornaments, viz. holy and gracious diſpoſitions, which ſerve to

turn their other talents into the proper channel, and to give them force and influence in the application. I am ſenſible, my brethren, that gifts may be conſidered as more aſſiſtant to the being of the miniſtry than even grace itſelf. We juſtly renounce the Popiſh doctrine, that the efficacy of the ſacraments, or other ordinances, depends upon the intention or inward ſtate of the adminiſtrator. In oppoſition to this the Aſſembly's Shorter Catechiſm ſays juſtly, "The ſacraments (and it is equally true of every other ordinance) become effectual to ſalvation, not from any virtue in them, nor in him that doth adminiſter them, but only by the bleſſing of Chriſt, and the working of his Spirit in them that by faith receive them." A hypocrite cannot be a faithful, but he may be in ſome degree a ſucceſsful miniſter. I am perſuaded there are not a few now in heaven, who were converted and edified by the miniſtry of thoſe who have taken up their abode in the place of torment. An awful reflection this indeed to thoſe who are intruſted with the office of the miniſtry. It brings to my mind a ſaying of an eminent and pious writer: Miniſters are in as great danger of deceiving themſelves as others, and in ſome reſpects greater, for they may be apt to miſtake their readineſs in thinking and ſpeaking of holy things, and thoſe gifts which God beſtows upon them for the benefit of his choſen, for the fruit and evidence of gracious diſpoſitions in their own hearts.

But notwithſtanding all this, it is beyond all controverſy, that one of the moſt eſſential qualifications of a good miniſter is, that he be a good man. It is a very difficult, as well as it is a very dreadful thing,

to preach an unknown Saviour. But where the love of Chriſt dwells and reigns in the heart, it gives ſuch attachment to his cauſe, ſo much love to his people, ſo much clearneſs and comprehenſion in underſtanding his truths, ſo great willingneſs, or rather deſire to communicate them, as cannot fail to have the greateſt influence on a miniſter's diligence, and at the ſame time gives reaſon to hope that he will ſpeak from faith to faith. Thus the apoſtle expreſſes himſelf, 2 Cor. iv. 13. "We having the ſame ſpirit of faith, according as it is written, I have believed, therefore have I ſpoken; we alſo believe, and therefore ſpeak."

Now to whom is a miniſter indebted for his holy diſpoſitions? Who implanted in him that love to Chriſt, which inſpires him with zeal and fidelity in his ſervice? Take the anſwer in the words of the apoſtle, 2 Cor. iv. 5, 6. "For we preach not ourſelves, but Chriſt Jeſus our Lord; and ourſelves your ſervants for Jeſus' ſake. For God who commanded the light to ſhine out of darkneſs, hath ſhined in our hearts, to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God, in the face of Jeſus Chriſt" It was the power of God that brought him again from the dead, and it is by the Spirit of God dwelling in him, that he is daily ſanctified and enabled to adorn the doctrine of God his Saviour in all things. So that the fire of his miniſtrations, and the light of his example, and the joint influence of both, are to be ultimately referred, and will by him be moſt willingly and thankfully attributed to the power and grace of God his Redeemer, of whoſe fulneſs we all have received, and grace for grace.

2. But in the ſecond place, the ſucceſs of the goſpel depends entirely on God, as it is he who gives efficacy to the inſtructions even of the moſt eminent and beſt qualified miniſters, by the immediate ſupernatural operation of his Spirit and grace. Let us ſuppoſe a miniſter endued with the fineſt natural parts, and theſe improved and cultivated by all the advantages of human learning; let him have the moſt acute and penetrating genius, the moſt lively imagination, the moſt ſolid judgment, the moſt charming and perſuaſive eloquence; in fine, let him have what alone is of more value than all theſe, an eminently pious and devout heart—with ſo many advantages he ſhall not be able to make one ſincere convert, unleſs almighty God be pleaſed to open the way by his divine grace into the heart and conſcience of the ſinner. It is not then merely by furniſhing the proper means, and by the diſpoſition of his providence, giving them an opportunity of exerting their influence, that God promotes the ſucceſs of the goſpel, but by an immediate and powerful agency, diſtinct from, and ſuperior to every ſecond cauſe.

I have endeavoured to expreſs this with the greateſt fulneſs, and the greateſt clearneſs, as a truth of the utmoſt importance. While we believe the uſe and neceſſity of means and ſecond cauſes, we ought never to ſeparate them from, or forget their ſubordination to God. There can hardly be a nobler illuſtration of this truth than the apoſtle has given us in the text by a natural ſimilitude: "I have planted," ſays he, "Apollos watered, but God gave the

increaſe." His expreſſions are taken from huſbandry, or gardening, which is a particular branch of it. By an alluſion to theſe arts, he explains his ſubject in a manner level to the capacity of every thinking perſon. The huſbandman or gardener may manure, dig up, and mellow the ſoil; he may ſow his ſeed and dreſs his field with the greateſt diligence and care; but what a little way has he gone, or rather, indeed, he hath not ſo much as begun the great proceſs of growth and vegetation, that daily miracle, may I not call it, before our eyes. How many things muſt neceſſarily concur which are beyond the reach of his power! The enlivening heat of the ſun, the refreſhing dews and rain from the bottles of heaven, are wholly under the direction and diſpoſal of the omnipotent Jehovah. Cannot he, when he will, make the heavens over your heads as braſs, and the earth under your feet as iron? Nay, not only ſo, but the power of growing in the ſeed, by ſtriking out its roots and opening its bud, and the natural diſpoſition in the earth to nouriſh it, are derived, not from any virtue inherent in the things themſelves, but only from that almighty word, "Let the earth bring forth every tree bearing fruit, and every herb bearing ſeed after its kind." Juſt ſo in that ſpiritual huſbandry of which the apoſtle is ſpeaking; miniſters may ſow the good ſeed of the word of God, but it is his own prerogative to give it a regenerating and ſanctifying efficacy, and make it productive of faith in the heart, and good works in the life. Miniſters may continue to water the ſeed already ſown, with ſuitable inſtructions and exhortations, and the diligent uſe of all thoſe means which God hath ap-

pointed for the eſtabliſhment and growth of believers; but it is only the influence of his own Spirit that makes theſe means productive of the deſired effect. Therefore the apoſtle concludes, in language drawn from the ſimilitude, "So then neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth, but God that giveth the increaſe."

This important truth, my brethren, is capable of a very full and clear proof from the ſacred oracles. Every thing we find recorded there concerning the miſſion of the prophets, and the ſucceſs of their meſſage, carries this truth as it were in its boſom. Nay, the great prophet of the church gives us this very view of his own miniſtry as the Son of man. John vi. 44, 45. "No man can come to me, except the Father which hath ſent me draw him; and I will raiſe him up at the laſt day. It is written in the prophets, And they ſhall be all taught of God. Every man, therefore, that hath heard and hath learned of the Father, cometh unto me." You ſee that, to the commiſſion which our Lord gives to his apoſtles, is annexed a promiſe of his preſence and power to accompany their miniſtrations. Matt. xxviii. 19, 20. "Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghoſt, teaching them to obſerve all things whatſoever I have commanded you; and lo I am with you alway, even to the end of the world. Amen."

But inſtead of multiplying paſſages of Scripture, I ſhall direct you to one which will ſet this part of my argument in the cleareſt light. It is that paſſage which gives an account of the converſion of

Lydia, recorded Acts xvi. 14. "And a certain woman, named Lydia, a ſeller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worſhipped God, heard us, whoſe heart the Lord opened, that ſhe attended to the things that were ſpoken of Paul." Now if we attend to the circumſtances of this converſion, we ſhall find that if any thing could have been effectually done without the direct and immediate concurrence of the grace of God, it might have been expected here. The caſe was every way promiſing. The hearer was one who had renounced idolatry, and embraced the worſhip of the true God. She was, it is not improbable, a devout woman, ſo far as her knowledge reached, and wanted only to be inſtructed in the faith of Chriſt. Here was for a preacher the great apoſtle of the Gentiles. I need ſay no more to ſhew how well qualified he was to do his part; and yet we find that even in this moſt favourable caſe, the immediate concurrence of divine grace was neceſſary to complete the work. The Lord muſt by his own good Spirit open the heart of Lydia, elſe even the apoſtle Paul, with all his divine accompliſhments, and a heart glowing with the warmeſt zeal for the glory of Chriſt and the ſalvation of ſouls, will be but an unſucceſsful preacher.

I need not make uſe of any ſeparate arguments to convince you, that this holds equally true of the growth and comfort of believers, as of the converſion of ſinners. Whether miniſters are employed in planting or watering, the inſtrument is nothing; ſucceſs flows only from God. Let me therefore requeſt and beſeech you to hear and adore the ſtriking truth, a Paul or Apollos in the pulpit will be alto-

gether unſucceſsful without the almighty power and grace of God. The moſt clear and diſtinct illuſtration of divine truths, without inward and ſpiritual illumination, will leave the hearer in ignorance, or lead him into error. The moſt awful denunciations of a ſon of thunder, without divine power, will leave the ſinner hardened, or even increaſe the fearedneſs of conſcience. The moſt melting and tender application to the affections, without divine energy, will be treated with contempt and ſcorn. In one word, the moſt lively adminiſtration of ordinances, without the bleſſing from above, will be but, in the language of the prophet, as a miſcarrying womb and dry breaſts.

My brethren, you may not only be convinced of this truth, becauſe it is recorded in the word of God, but may ſee it daily exemplified in every part of the viſible church. You may ſee the ſame ordinances acceptable, delightful, and profitable to ſome, deſerted, deſpiſed, and reſiſted by others. Under the very ſame adminiſtration, you may ſee ſome effectually perſuaded to turn to the living God, walking in the fear of the Lord, and in the comfort of the Holy Ghoſt, and daily multiplied; ſome, on the other hand, caring for none of theſe things, but ſleeping in ſecurity; nay, ſome whoſe corruptions are irritated, ſwelling with rage, contradicting and blaſpheming: all which is well deſcribed by the apoſtle Paul, 2 Cor. ii. 15, 16. "For we are unto God a ſweet ſavour of Chriſt, in them that are ſaved, and in them that periſh. To the one we are the ſavour of death unto death; and to the other, the ſavour

of life unto life; and who is ſufficient for theſe things?"

3. The third and laſt obſervation I am to make for the illuſtration of this truth is, that ſucceſs in the goſpel depends wholly upon God, as he exerciſes much of his own ſovereignty in the manner of beſtowing it. He takes care, if I may ſpeak ſo, to ſhew that it is from himſelf, by the meaſure in which he proportions the ſucceſs to the nature and ſufficiency of the means he ſees proper to employ. All is from God, as you have already heard, becauſe the diſpoſing and commiſſioning his miniſters is originally his own work—again, becauſe however well qualified they may be, his own almighty agency is neceſſary to give them ſucceſs. But when there is a regular proportion always obſerved between the means and the end, men are ready to overlook or forget the great and firſt cauſe of all. For this reaſon he ſees it often meet to manifeſt his ſovereignty, in order to command our attention, by working without means, or by the weakeſt means, or even contrary to means, and blaſting the effect of thoſe that were moſt excellent and promiſing in human judgment. Juſt as the beautiful and regular order of the natural world, the mutual dependence of one part upon, and its ſubſerviency to another, is a proof of the wiſdom and omnipotence of the Creator. Yet he ſees it neceſſary ſometimes to interpoſe in an extraordinary way, and to controul the courſe of nature, to ſhew that it is abſolutely at his command.

Remember, however, my brethren, that in carrying on the work of the goſpel, God uſually propor-

tions the ſucceſs to the propriety and ſufficiency of the means. When he has much work to do, he commonly raiſes up ſome perſons eminently qualified; he draws from his quiver ſome poliſhed ſhafts to pierce the ranks of oppoſing hoſts. Yet he often preſents to our view ſuch circumſtances as ſerve to ſhew the dependence of all means upon himſelf. When the goſpel was firſt preached, the apoſtles were indeed fully fitted and furniſhed for their work, but it was by a miracle. They were originally poor illiterate fiſhermen, quite unequal in themſelves to the aſtoniſhing undertaking of producing a revolution in the ſtate of religion, and the ſentiments of mankind over the whole earth. Such perſons ſeem to have been employed for this wiſe purpoſe, "that our faith might not ſtand in the wiſdom of man, but in the power of God." I have often conſidered this matter with a mixture of reverence and admiration.

That proper reſpect might ſtill be had to the qualifications of miniſters, and that none might be juſtified in pouring contempt on human ſcience, the apoſtle Paul, a man of eminent learning and ability, was the moſt active, uſeful, and ſucceſsful of all the apoſtles; and one third part, at leaſt, of the whole canon of the New Teſtament was written by him. At the ſame time there were ſuch circumſtances in his calling and converſion, as made him one of the moſt illuſtrious monuments of the ſovereignty and riches of divine grace, that any age has produced.

In the ſame manner we ſee every day the cleareſt proofs of the power, wiſdom, and ſovereignty of God. We ſee that he many times gives extraordi-

nary and ſenſible aſſiſtance to thoſe whom he employs in his own work. So that they both perceive and confeſs that it is not they, but the grace of God that is with them. Sometimes thoſe of very moderate, or even of the weakeſt natural abilities, have an unction from the Holy One, and by their piety and diligence become workmen that need not be aſhamed, rightly dividing the word of truth. This may be conſidered as an accompliſhment of what Iſaiah ſays of himſelf, Iſa. l. 4. "And the Lord God hath given me the tongue of the learned, that I ſhould know how to ſpeak a word in ſeaſon to him that is weary." See alſo the expreſſion of the Pſalmiſt, Pſal. xxv. 14. "The ſecret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will ſhew them his covenant." Our Lord promiſes to his diſciples extraordinary aſſiſtance in time of extraordinary trials and ſuffering: Luke xxi. 14, 15. "Settle it therefore in your hearts, not to meditate before what ye ſhall anſwer. For I will give you a mouth and wiſdom, which all your adverſaries ſhall not be able to gainſay nor reſiſt." And to name one more paſſage, it is propheſied by Iſaiah of the goſpel times, chap. xxxii. 4. "The heart alſo of the raſh ſhall underſtand knowledge, and the tongue of the ſtammerers ſhall be ready to ſpeak plainly."

In a former part of this diſcourſe I have admitted, that gifts may be conſidered as more neceſſary to the being of the miniſtry, than even grace itſelf. Yet certainly true religion in the heart is of far greater importance to the ſucceſs and efficacy of the miniſtry, than eminence or gifts. It ſeems often the very purpoſe of divine providence, to pour contempt

upon unſanctified talents. The humble paſtor of meaner rank, who loves his Maſter, his work, and his people, ſhall often have many ſeals of his miniſtry, while the perſon of ſuperior parts is urged by ambitious views into the unprofitable paths of worldly honours, or inſtigated by unmortified paſſion to mar the ſucceſs of his miniſtry, by launching out into the tempeſtuous ocean of political conteſt and faction. But beſides the unfruitfulneſs of unſanctified talents, there are alſo many proofs of the ſovereignty of God, in refuſing his bleſſing, and making the beſt miniſters in a great meaſure unprofitable to a people, in righteous judgment for their paſt ſins. Even Iſaiah could ſay, chap. liii. 1. "Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed?" Our bleſſed Lord himſelf upbraided many of the cities where his mighty works were done, becauſe of their unbelief, and indeed upon many of his hearers his miniſtry, inſtead of a ſaving, had a hardening effect: John iii. 19. "And this is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men loved darkneſs rather than light, becauſe their deeds were evil." The ſame thing is elſewhere reſolved into the lively and righteous judgment of God. John xii. 39, 40. "Therefore they could not believe, becauſe that Eſaias ſaid again, He hath blinded their eyes, and hardened their heart, that they ſhould not ſee with their eyes, nor underſtand with their heart, and be converted, and I ſhould heal them."

I proceed now to make ſome practical improvement of what hath been ſaid. And in the

First place, A deep and lively impreſſion of the truth I have endeavoured to illuſtrate and ſupport, will be to thoſe who preach the goſpel an excellent preſervative from many temptations. It will preſerve them from truſting in themſelves, it will keep them ſtill looking upward, and engage them to maintain a continual intercourſe with the Father of lights, and the Author of every good and perfect gift. It will alſo particularly be an excellent mean of preſerving them from the dangerous extremes of oſtentation and ſloth. Oh, how unbecoming a miniſter is a vain-glorious diſplay of human art, burning incenſe to his own vanity, and preaching himſelf when he is called to preach Chriſt Jeſus the Lord! It is no wonder that God ſhould, in his providence, pour diſgrace and diſappointment on that miniſtry that is carried on in ſuch a manner as to aim more at promoting the credit of the ſervant than the honour of the Maſter. On the other hand, with what countenance can they look up to God for a bleſſing, who have been at no pains to qualify themſelves for his ſervice. As oſtentation provokes the divine jealouſy, ſo negligence is diſobedience, preſumption, and preciſely what the Scripture calls tempting God. I would never deſire to be conſidered as one who would encourage men to ruſh into a pulpit unprepared, and diſgrace their honourable calling by rude, undigeſted, diſorderly effuſions, or ſuch mean, ſlovenly, indecent language, as lays the hearers under the ſtrongeſt temptation to treat it with an inſolence of indignation and contempt. Let me commend this to the attention of ſuch young perſons as may have an eye to the ſacred office.

My dear fellow ſtudents, how happy they who can unite together the ſimplicity of the goſpel and the dignity of the pulpit; who are, on the one hand, not aſhamed of the croſs, and the ignominy that attends it, and, on the other, as devoted ſervants, are reſolved to comply with the counſel given by the apoſtle Paul to Timothy, 1 Tim. iv. 15, 16. "Meditate upon theſe things, give thyſelf wholly to them, that thy profiting may appear unto all. Take heed unto thyſelf, and unto thy doctrine; continue in them; for in doing this thou ſhalt both ſave thyſelf and them that hear thee."

2. A deep impreſſion of the truth I have endeavoured to illuſtrate, will be an excellent preſervative to the hearers of the goſpel from many temptations which often render their attendance on ordinances, as fruitleſs as pernicious. It will purify their views and motives in attending on ordinances. It will deliver them from a ſinful and unreaſonable attachment to men, and carry them more immediately into the preſence of the living God. It will ſave them from that giddy, unſettled diſpoſition, of running with unbounded curioſity from one to another, not that they may be built up in holineſs and comfort, but that their imagination and fancy may be gratified. It will preſerve them from hearing the goſpel merely as critics, in order to paſs their judgment on the ſoundneſs or ability of their teachers, which, with whatever pride or ſelf-ſufficiency it may be done, is as empty and unprofitable a manner of hearing as any that can be named. It will ſettle their eſteem of, and attachment to their paſtors, upon the beſt and moſt immoveable foundation. They

will then love them for their work's ſake, they will love them for their Maſter's ſake, they will love them for their own ſouls ſake, and for their ſubſerviency to their daily edification. It will carry them to the throne of grace, and incline them to make continual and fervent ſupplication to God for his aſſiſtance and countenance to his miniſters in his own work; and this will bring them to his houſe in the beſt and happieſt temper for hearing with profit. In one word, it will make them in a great meaſure loſe view of the creature, and hear the goſpel, not "as the word of man, but as it is indeed, and in truth, the word of God."

3. Let me intreat the prayers of this congregation for the miniſters of the goſpel in general, and for us who miniſter among you in holy things, that we may be abundantly qualified for the diſcharge of our important truſt in all its parts. The apoſtle Paul, though extraordinarily called, though ſingularly qualified, and eminently aſſiſted, never fails to aſk the prayers and interceſſions of the faithful in his behalf: Eph. vi. 19. "And for me, that utterance may be given unto me, that I may open my mouth boldly, to make known the myſtery of the goſpel." After this approved example, I hope you will forgive me if I put in a particular claim in my own behalf, for your intereſt at the throne of grace. I make no merit at all of having left country, and kindred, and connexions of the deareſt kind, in order to ſerve the intereſt of the church of Chriſt in this part of the globe; for I conſider with pleaſure the oneneſs of his body, and the extent of the catholic church, that there ſhall come from the eaſt, and

from the weſt, and from the north, and from the ſouth, and ſit down with Abraham, and Iſaac, and Jacob, in the kingdom of their Father. Could we but think as we ought of the great removal which we are making from time to time into an eternal ſtate, the removal of our bodies, and the change of our ſcene of ſervice from Europe to America, would appear altogether unworthy of notice. But when I conſider the reſpect and affection, ſo much above my deſert, that have been ſhewn to me ſince my arrival in this place, and the teſtimonies of joy and ſatisfaction which have been given by all ranks, I am filled with the greateſt concern: I ſay I am filled with the greateſt concern, becauſe it plainly implies an expectation of duty and ſervice from me, which I fear I ſhall be ill able to perform. Let me, therefore, on ſo juſt a foundation, not ſolicit only, but demand an intereſt in your prayers. Pray that an all-ſufficient God may give ſtrength from above, and may pour down his bleſſing on the public inſtitution in this place, which, upon the beſt information, I think I may ſay has been founded in faith; and therefore why ſhould not we continue to ſerve it in hope? Pray that ſucceſs may attend the miniſtry of the goſpel in this place; and that, if it pleaſe God, the eſteem and affection ſhewn to me by all to whom I ſtand now related, may not be leſs than it is; for I have not the leaſt reaſon to deſire, nor indeed the courage to hope that it can poſſibly be greater. Once more, pray that my beloved charge whom I left in Scotland, and will never forget, may, by the ſpecial conduct of divine providence, be ſupplied

with a faithful paſtor, who may feed them with knowledge and underſtanding.

4. In the laſt place, Suffer me to conclude by addreſſing a few words to thoſe in this aſſembly, who are, or who have reaſon to ſuſpect themſelves to be in a ſtate of diſtance from God. I know that he himſelf only can change your hearts. Yet he hath given it in charge to his miniſters that you ſhould receive warning. And be aſſured, that if you deſpiſe the meſſage, if you trample upon the divine mercy, and reſiſt the Spirit of God when pleading with you in his word, or ſtriving and bearing witneſs againſt you in your conſciences, your everlaſting perdition will lie entirely at your own door. God will be juſt when he ſpeaketh, and clear when he judgeth. Conſider, I beſeech you, that there is certainly, to all of us here preſent, one thing that is needful. It ſignifies very little, whether you paſs the little uncertain time that you ſhall yet be in the body, in abundance or in penury, in honour or in ſhame, compared to what ſhall become of you for ever. Lay theſe things to heart then, in this day of your merciful viſitation. There is but one way to eſcape: "Believe in the name of the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, that believing you may have life through his name."

A

PASTORAL LETTER

FROM THE

SYNOD OF NEW-YORK AND PHILADELPHIA,

To the Congregations under their care; to be read from the Pulpits on Thurſday, June 29. 1775, being the day of the General Faſt.

VERY DEAR BRETHREN,

THE Synod of New-York and Philadelphia, being met at a time when public affairs wear ſo threatening an aſpect, and when (unleſs God in his ſovereign providence ſpeedily prevent it) all the horrors of a civil war throughout this great continent are to be apprehended, were of opinion, that they could not diſcharge their duty to the numerous congregations under their care, without addreſſing them at this important criſis. As the firm belief and habitual recollection of the power and preſence of the living God, ought at all times to poſſeſs the

minds of real Chriſtians, ſo in ſeaſons of public calamity, when the Lord is known by the judgment which he executeth, it would be an ignorance or indifference highly criminal, not to look up to him with reverence, to implore his mercy by humble and fervent prayer, and, if poſſible, to prevent his vengeance by unfeigned repentance.

We do therefore, brethren, beſeech you in the moſt earneſt manner, to look beyond the immediate authors either of your ſufferings or fears, and to acknowledge the holineſs and juſtice of the Almighty in the preſent viſitation. "He is righteous in all his ways, and holy in all his works.—Affliction ſpringeth not out of the duſt.—He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men;" and therefore it becomes every perſon, family, city, and province, to humble themſelves before his throne, to confeſs their ſins by which they have provoked his indignation, and intreat him to pour out upon all ranks a ſpirit of repentance and of prayer. Fly alſo for forgiveneſs to the atoning blood of the great Redeemer, "the blood of ſprinkling which ſpeaketh better things than that of Abel." Remember and confeſs, not only your ſins in general, but thoſe prevalent national offences which may be juſtly conſidered as the procuring cauſes of public judgments; particularly profaneneſs and contempt of God, his name, Sabbaths, and ſanctuary;—pride, luxury, uncleanneſs, and neglect of family religion and government, with the deplorable ignorance and ſecurity which certainly ought to be imputed to this as their principal cauſe. All theſe are among us highly aggravated by the ineſtimable privileges which we

have hitherto enjoyed without interruption ſince the firſt ſettlement of this country. If in the preſent day of diſtreſs we expect that God will hear our ſupplications, and interpoſe for our protection or deliverance, let us remember what he himſelf requires of us is, that our prayers ſhould be attended with a ſincere purpoſe, and thorough endeavour after perſonal and family reformation: "If thou prepare thine heart, and ſtretch out thy hand towards him; if iniquity be in thine hand, put it far away, and let not wickedneſs dwell in thy tabernacles," Job xi. 13, 14.

The Synod cannot help thinking that this is a proper time for preſſing all of every rank ſeriouſly to conſider the things that belong to their eternal peace. Hoſtilities, long feared, have now taken place, the ſword has been drawn in one province, and the whole continent, with hardly any exception, ſeem determined to defend their rights by force of arms. If, at the ſame time, the Britiſh miniſtry ſhall continue to enforce their claims by violence, a laſting and bloody conteſt muſt be expected. Surely then it becomes thoſe who have taken up arms, and profeſs a willingneſs to hazard their lives in the cauſe of liberty, to be prepared for death, which to many muſt be the certain, and to every one is a poſſible or probable event.

We have long ſeen with concern the circumſtances which occaſioned, and the gradual increaſe of this unhappy difference. As miniſters of the goſpel of peace we have ardently wiſhed that it could, and often hoped that it would have been more early ac-

commodated. It is well known to you (otherwiſe it would be imprudent indeed thus publicly to profeſs) that we have not been inſtrumental in inflaming the minds of the people, or urging them to acts of violence and diſorder. Perhaps no inſtance can be given on ſo intereſting a ſubject, in which political ſentiments have been ſo long and ſo fully kept from the pulpit, and even malice itſelf has not charged us with labouring from the preſs; but things are now come to ſuch a ſtate, that as we do not wiſh to conceal our opinions as men and citizens, ſo the relation we ſtand in to you ſeemed to make the preſent improvement of it to your ſpiritual benefit an indiſpenſable duty. Suffer us then to lay hold of your preſent temper of mind, and to exhort, eſpecially the young and vigorous, by aſſuring them, that there is no ſoldier ſo undaunted as the pious man, no army ſo formidable as thoſe who are ſuperior to the fear of death. There is nothing more awful to think of, than that thoſe whoſe trade is war ſhould be deſpiſers of the name of the Lord of hoſts, and that they ſhould expoſe themſelves to the imminent danger of being immediately ſent from curſing and cruelty on earth, to the blaſpheming rage and deſpairing horror of the infernal pit. Let therefore every one who, from generoſity of ſpirit or benevolence of heart, offers himſelf as a champion in his country's cauſe, be perſuaded to reverence the name, and walk in the fear of the Prince of the kings of the earth, and then he may, with the moſt unſhaken firmneſs, expect the iſſue either in victory or death.

Let it not be forgotten, that though for the wife

ends of his providence, it may pleaſe God for a ſeaſon to ſuffer his people to lie under unmerited oppreſſion, yet in general we may expect, that thoſe who fear and ſerve him in ſincerity and truth, will be favoured with his countenance and ſtrength. It is both the character and the privilege of the children of God, that they "call upon him in the day of trouble," and he who keepeth covenant and truth for ever has ſaid, that "his ears are always open to their cry." We need not mention to you in how many inſtances the event in battles and ſucceſs in war have turned upon circumſtances which were inconſiderable in themſelves, as well as out of the power of human prudence to foreſee or direct, becauſe we ſuppoſe you firmly believe, that after all the counſels of men, and the moſt probable and promiſing means, the Lord will do "that which ſeemeth him good;" nor hath his promiſe ever failed of its full accompliſhment: "The Lord is with you while ye be with him, and if ye ſeek him he will be found of you; but if ye forſake him, he will forſake you," 2 Chron. xv. 2.

After this exhortation, which we thought ourſelves called upon to give you at this time, on your great intereſt, "the one thing needful," we ſhall take the liberty to offer a few advices to the ſocieties under our charge, as to their public and general conduct; and,

Firſt, In carrying on this imporrant ſtruggle, let every opportunity be taken to expreſs your attachment and reſpect to our ſovereign king George, and to the revolution principles by which his auguſt family was ſeated on the Britiſh throne. We recom-

mend, indeed, not only allegiance to him from duty and principle, as the firſt magiſtrate of the empire, but eſteem and reverence for the perſon of the prince, who has merited well of his ſubjects on many accounts, and who has probably been miſled into the late and preſent meaſures by thoſe about him; neither have we any doubt, that they themſelves have been in a great degree deceived by falſe information from intereſted perſons reſiding in America. It gives us the greateſt pleaſure to ſay, from our own certain knowledge of all belonging to our communion, and from the beſt means of information, of the far greateſt part of all denominations in this country, that the preſent oppoſition to the meaſures of adminiſtration does not in the leaſt ariſe from diſaffection to the king, or a deſire of ſeparation from the parent ſtate. We are happy in being able with truth to affirm, that no part of America would either have approved or permitted ſuch inſults as have been offered to the Sovereign in Great Britain. We exhort you, therefore, to continue in the ſame diſpoſition, and not to ſuffer oppreſſion or injury itſelf eaſily to provoke you to any thing which may ſeem to betray contrary ſentiments. Let it ever appear, that you only deſire the preſervation and ſecurity of thoſe rights which belong to you as freemen and Britons, and that reconciliation upon theſe terms is your moſt ardent deſire.

Secondly, Be careful to maintain the union which at preſent ſubſiſts through all the colonies. Nothing can be more manifeſt, than that the ſucceſs of every meaſure depends on its being inviolably preſerved; and therefore we hope that you will leave nothing

undone which can promote that end. In particular, as the Continental Congreſs, now ſitting at Philadelphia, conſiſt of delegates choſen in the moſt free and unbiaſſed manner, by the body of the people, let them not only be treated with reſpect, and encouraged in their difficult ſervice—not only let your prayers be offered up to God for his direction in their proceedings, but adhere firmly to their reſolutions; and let it be ſeen that they are able to bring out the whole ſtrength of this vaſt country to carry them into execution. We would alſo adviſe for the ſame purpoſe, that a ſpirit of candour, charity, and mutual eſteem, be preſerved and promoted towards thoſe of different religious denominations. Perſons of probity and principle, of every profeſſion, ſhould be united together as ſervants of the ſame Maſter, and the experience of our happy concord hitherto in a ſtate of liberty, ſhould engage all to unite in ſupport of the common intereſt; for there is no example in hiſtory, in which civil liberty was deſtroyed, and the rights of conſcience preſerved entire.

Thirdly, We do earneſtly exhort and beſeech the ſocieties under our care, to be ſtrict and vigilant in their private government, and to watch over the morals of their ſeveral members. It is with the utmoſt pleaſure we remind you, that the laſt Continental Congreſs determined to diſcourage luxury in living, public diverſions, and gaming of all kinds, which have ſo fatal an influence on the morals of the people. If it is undeniable, that univerſal profligacy makes a nation ripe for divine judgments, and is the natural mean of bringing them to ruin, reformation of manners is of the utmoſt neceſſity in

our preſent diſtreſs. At the ſame time, as it has been obſerved by many eminent writers, that the cenſorial power, which had for its object the manners of the public in the ancient free ſtates, was abſolutely neceſſary to their continuance, we cannot help being of opinion, that the only thing which we have now to ſupply the place of this, is the religious diſcipline of the ſeveral ſects with reſpect to their own members; ſo that the denomination or profeſſion which ſhall take the moſt effectual care of the inſtruction of its members, and maintain its diſcipline in the fulleſt vigour, will do the moſt eſſential ſervice to the whole body. For the very ſame reaſon, the greateſt ſervice which magiſtrates or perſons in authority can do with reſpect to the religion or morals of the people, is to defend and ſecure the rights of conſcience in the moſt equal and impartial manner.

Fourthly, We cannot but recommend, and urge in the warmeſt manner, a regard to order and the public peace; and as in many places, during the confuſions that prevail, legal proceedings have become difficult, it is hoped that all perſons will conſcientiouſly pay their juſt debts, and to the utmoſt of their power ſerve one another, ſo that the evils inſeparable from a civil war may not be augmented by wantonneſs and irregularity.

Fifthly, We think it of importance at this time, to recommend to all of every rank, but eſpecially to thoſe who may be called to action, a ſpirit of humanity and mercy. "Every battle of the warrior is with confuſed noiſe, and garments rolled in blood." It is impoſſible to appeal to the ſword without be-

ing expoſed to many ſcenes of cruelty and ſlaughter; but it is often obſerved, that civil wars are carried on with a rancour and ſpirit of revenge much greater than thoſe between independent ſtates. The injuries received or ſuppoſed in civil wars wound more deeply than thoſe of foreign enemies; it is therefore the more neceſſary to guard againſt this abuſe, and recommend that meekneſs and gentleneſs of ſpirit which is the nobleſt attendant on true valour. That man will fight moſt bravely, who never fights till it is neceſſary, and who ceaſes to fight as ſoon as the neceſſity is over.

Laſtly, We would recommend to all the ſocieties under our care, not to content themſelves with attending devoutly on general faſt, but to continue habitually in the exerciſe of prayer, and to have frequent occaſional voluntary meetings for ſolemn interceſſion with God on the important trial. Thoſe who are immediately expoſed to danger need your ſympathy; and we learn from the Scriptures, that fervency and importunity are the very characters of that prayer of "the righteous man which availeth much."

We conclude with our earneſt prayer, that the God of heaven may bleſs you in your temporal and ſpiritual concerns, and that the preſent unnatural diſpute may be ſpeedily terminated by an equitable and laſting ſettlement on conſtitutional principles.

SERMON XXII.

THE DOMINION OF PROVIDENCE OVER THE PASSIONS OF MEN.

Preached at Princeton, on the 17th of May 1776, being the General Faſt appointed by the Congreſs through the United Colonies.

Dedicated to the Honourable JOHN HANCOCK, Eſq. Preſident of the Congreſs of the United States of America.

To which is added, An Addreſs to the Natives of Scotland reſiding in America.

PSAL. lxxvi. 10.

Surely the wrath of man ſhall praiſe thee; the remainder of wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain.

THERE is not a greater evidence, either of the reality or the power of religion, than a firm belief of God's univerſal preſence, and a conſtant attention to the influence and operation of his providence. It is by this means that the Chriſtian

may be ſaid, in the emphatical Scripture language, "to walk with God, and to endure as ſeeing him who is inviſible."

The doctrine of divine providence is very full and complete in the ſacred oracles. It extends not only to things which we may think of great moment, and therefore worthy of notice, but to things the moſt indifferent and inconſiderable: "Are not two ſparrows ſold for a farthing," ſays our Lord, "and one of them falleth not to the ground without your heavenly Father;" nay, "the very hairs of your head are all numbered." It extends not only to things beneficial and ſalutary, or to the direction and aſſiſtance of thoſe who are the ſervants of the living God, but to things ſeemingly moſt hurtful and deſtructive, and to perſons the moſt refractory and diſobedient. He overrules all his creatures, and all their actions. Thus we are told, that "fire, hail, ſnow, vapour, and ſtormy wind, fulfil his word," in the courſe of nature; and even ſo the moſt impetuous and diſorderly paſſions of men that are under no reſtraint from themſelves, are yet perfectly ſubject to the dominion of Jehovah. They carry his commiſſion, they obey his orders, they are limited and reſtrained by his authority, and they conſpire with every thing elſe in promoting his glory. There is the greater need to take notice of this, that men are not generally ſufficiently aware of the diſtinction between the law of God and his purpoſe. They are apt to ſuppoſe, that as the temper of the ſinner is contrary to the one, ſo the outrages of the ſinner are able to defeat the other; than which nothing can be

more falſe. The truth is plainly aſſerted, and nobly expreſſed by the Pſalmiſt in the text, "Surely the wrath of man ſhall praiſe thee; the remainder of wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain."

This Pſalm was evidently compoſed as a ſong of praiſe for ſome ſignal victory obtained, which was at the ſame time a remarkable deliverance from threatening danger. The author was one or other of the later prophets, and the occaſion probably the unſucceſsful aſſault of Jeruſalem, by the army of Sennacherib king of Aſſyria, in the days of Hezekiah. Great was the inſolence and boaſting of his generals and ſervants againſt the city of the living God, as may be ſeen in the thirty-ſixth chapter of Iſaiah. Yet it pleaſed God to deſtroy their enemies, and, by his own immediate interpoſition, to grant them deliverance. Therefore the Pſalmiſt ſays, in the fifth and ſixth verſes of this pſalm, "The ſtout-hearted are ſpoiled, they have ſlept their ſleep. None of the men of might have found their hands. At thy rebuke, O God of Jacob, both the chariot and the horſe are caſt into a deep ſleep." After a few more remarks to the ſame purpoſe, he draws the inference, or makes the reflection in the text, "Surely the wrath of man ſhall praiſe thee; the remainder of wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain:" which may be paraphraſed thus—The fury and injuſtice of oppreſſors ſhall bring in a tribute of praiſe to thee; the influence of thy righteous providence ſhall be clearly diſcerned; the countenance and ſupport thou wilt give to thine own people ſhall be glorioufly illuſtrated; thou ſhalt ſet the bounds which the boldeſt cannot paſs.

I am ſenſible, my brethren, that the time and occaſion of this pſalm may ſeem to be, in one reſpect, ill ſuited to the intereſting circumſtances of this country at preſent. It was compoſed after the victory was obtained, whereas we are now but putting on the harneſs, and entering upon an important conteſt, the length of which it is impoſſible to foreſee, and the iſſue of which it will perhaps be thought preſumption to foretel. But as the truth, with reſpect to God's moral government, is the ſame and unchangeable; as the iſſue, in the caſe of Sennacherib's invaſion, did but lead the prophet to acknowledge it, our duty and intereſt conſpire in calling upon us to improve it. And I have choſen to inſiſt upon it on this day of ſolemn humiliation, as it will probably help us to a clear and explicit view of what ſhould be the chief ſubject of our prayers and endeavours, as well as the great object of our hope and truſt in our preſent ſituation.

The truth then aſſerted in this text, which I propoſe to illuſtrate and improve is—That all the diſorderly paſſions of men, whether expoſing the innocent to private injury, or whether they are the arrows of divine judgment in public calamity, ſhall, in the end, be to the praiſe of God. Or, to apply it more particularly to the preſent ſtate of the American Colonies, and the plague of war—The ambition of miſtaken princes, the cunning and cruelty of oppreſſive and corrupt miniſters, and even the inhumanity of brutal ſoldiers, however dreadful, ſhall finally promote the glory of God; and in the mean time, while the ſtorm continues, his mercy and kind-

neſs ſhall appear in preſcribing bounds to their rage and fury.

In diſcourſing on this ſubject it is my intention, through the aſſiſtance of divine grace,

I. To point out to you in ſome particulars, how the wrath of man praiſes God.

II. To apply theſe principles to our preſent ſituation, by inferences of truth for your inſtruction and comfort, and by ſuitable exhortations to duty in the important criſis.

In the *firſt* place, I am to point out to you in ſome particulars, how the wrath of man praiſes God. I ſay in *ſome* inſtances, becauſe it is far from being in my power either to mention or explain the whole. There is an unſearchable depth in the divine counſels, which it is impoſſible for us to penetrate. It is the duty of every good man to place the moſt unlimited confidence in divine wiſdom, and to believe that thoſe meaſures of providence that are moſt unintelligible to him, are yet planned with the ſame ſkill, and directed to the ſame great purpoſes as others, the reaſon and tendency of which he can explain in the cleareſt manner. But where revelation and experience enable us to diſcover the wiſdom, equity, or mercy of divine providence, nothing can be more delightful or profitable to a ſerious mind, and therefore I beg your attention to the following remarks.

In the firſt place, The wrath of man praiſes God as it is an example and illuſtration of divine truth, and clearly points out the corruption of our nature, which is the foundation-ſtone of the doctrine of re-

demption. Nothing can be more abſolutely neceſſary to true religion, than a clear and full conviction of the ſinfulneſs of our nature and ſtate. Without this there can be neither repentance in the ſinner nor humility in the believer. Without this, all that is ſaid in Scripture of the wiſdom and mercy of God in providing a Saviour, is without force and without meaning. Juſtly does our Saviour ſay, "The whole have no need of a phyſician, but thoſe that are ſick. I came not to call the righteous, but ſinners to repentance." Thoſe who are not ſenſible that they are ſinners, will treat every exhortation to repentance, and every offer of mercy with diſdain or defiance.

But where can we have a more affecting view of the corruption of our nature, than in the wrath of man, when exerting itſelf in oppreſſion, cruelty, and blood? It muſt be owned, indeed, that this truth is abundantly manifeſt in times of the greateſt tranquillity. Others may, if they pleaſe, treat the corruption of our nature as a chimera; for my part, I ſee it every where, and I feel it every day. All the diſorders in human ſociety, and the greateſt part even of the unhappineſs we are expoſed to, ariſes from the envy, malice, covetouſneſs, and other luſts of man. If we and all about us were juſt what we ought to be in all reſpects, we ſhould not need to go any further for heaven, for it would be upon earth. But war and violence preſent a ſpectacle ſtill more awful. How affecting is it to think, that the luſt of domination ſhould be ſo violent and univerſal! that men ſhould ſo rarely be ſatisfied with

their own poſſeſſions and acquiſitions, or even with the benefit that would ariſe from mutual ſervice, but ſhould look upon the happineſs and tranquillity of others as an obſtruction to their own! that, as if the great law of nature were not enough, "Duſt thou art, and to duſt thou ſhalt return," they ſhould be ſo furiouſly ſet for the deſtruction of each other! It is ſhocking to think, ſince the firſt murder of Abel by his brother Cain, what havock has been made of man by man in every age. What is it that fills the pages of hiſtory, but the wars and contentions of princes and empires? What vaſt numbers has lawleſs ambition brought into the field, and delivered as a prey to the deſtructive ſword?

If we dwell a little upon the circumſtances, they become deeply affecting. The mother bears a child with pain, rears him by the laborious attendance of many years, yet in the prime of life, in the vigour of health, and bloom of beauty, in a moment he is cut down by the dreadful inſtruments of death. "Every battle of the warrior is with confuſed noiſe, and garments rolled in blood;" but the horror of the ſcene is not confined to the field of ſlaughter. Few go there unrelated, or fall unlamented. In every hoſtile encounter what muſt be the impreſſion upon the relations of the deceaſed? The bodies of the dead can only be ſeen, or the cries of the dying heard for a ſingle day, but many days ſhall not put an end to the mourning of a parent for a beloved ſon, the joy and ſupport of his age, or of the widow and helpleſs offspring for a father taken away in the fulneſs of health and vigour.

But if this may be juſtly ſaid of all wars between

man and man, what ſhall we be able to ſay that is ſuitable to the abhorred ſcene of civil war between citizen and citizen? How deeply affecting is it, that thoſe who are the ſame in complexion, the ſame in blood, in language, and in religion, ſhould, notwithſtanding, butcher one another with unrelenting rage, and glory in the deed! that men ſhould lay waſte the fields of their fellow-ſubjects, with whoſe proviſion they themſelves had been often fed, and conſume with devouring fire thoſe houſes in which they had often found a hoſpitable ſhelter.

Theſe things are apt to overcome a weak mind with fear, or overwhelm it with ſorrow, and in the greateſt number are apt to excite the higheſt indignation, and kindle up a ſpirit of revenge. If this laſt has no other tendency than to direct and invigorate the meaſures of ſelf-defence, I do not take upon me to blame it, on the contrary I call it neceſſary and laudable.

But what I mean at this time to prove by the preceding reflections, and wiſh to impreſs on your minds, is the depravity of our nature. James iv. 1. "From whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even from your luſts that war in your members?" Men of lax and corrupt principles take great delight in ſpeaking to the praiſe of human nature, and extolling its dignity, without diſtinguiſhing what it was at its firſt creation, from what it is in its preſent fallen ſtate. Theſe fine ſpeculations are very grateful to a worldly mind. They are alſo much more pernicious to uncautious and unthinking youth, than even the temptations to a diſſolute and ſenſual life, againſt which

they are fortified by the dictates of natural conſcience, and a ſenſe of public ſhame. But I appeal from theſe viſionary reaſonings to the hiſtory of all ages, and the inflexible teſtimony of daily experience. Theſe will tell us what men have been in their practice, and from thence you may judge what they are by nature while unrenewed. If I am not miſtaken, a cool and candid attention, either to the paſt hiſtory or preſent ſtate of the world, but, above all, to the ravages of lawleſs power, ought to humble us in the duſt. It ſhould at once lead us to acknowledge the juſt view given us in Scripture of our loſt ſtate; to deſire the happy influence of renewing grace each for ourſelves; and to long for the dominion of righteouſneſs and peace, when "men ſhall beat their ſwords into plough-ſhares, and their ſpears into pruning-hooks; when nation ſhall not liſt up ſword againſt nation, neither ſhall they learn war any more," Micah iv. 3.*

* I cannot help embracing this opportunity of making a remark or two upon a virulent reflection thrown out againſt this doctrine, in a well-known pamphlet, *Common Senſe*. The author of that work expreſſes himſelf thus: "If the firſt king of any country was by election, that likewiſe eſtabliſhes a precedent for the next; for to ſay, that the right of all future generations is taken away by the act of the firſt electors, in their choice not only of a king, but of a family of kings for ever, hath no parallel in or out of Scripture, but the doctrine of original ſin, which ſuppoſes the free will of all men loſt in Adam; and from ſuch compariſon, and it will admit of no other, hereditary ſucceſſion can derive no glory. For as in Adam all ſinned, and as in the firſt electors all men obeyed; as in the one all mankind were ſubjected to Satan, and in the other to ſovereignty; as our innocence

2. The wrath of man praiſeth God, as it is the inſtrument in his hand for bringing ſinners to repentance, and for the correction and improvement of

was loſt in the firſt, and our authority in the laſt; and as both diſable us from re-aſſuming ſome former ſtate and privilege, it unanſwerably follows, that original ſin and hereditary ſucceſſion are parallels. Diſhonourable rank! Inglorious connection! Yet the moſt ſubtle ſophiſt cannot produce a juſter ſimile *." Without the ſhadow of reaſoning, he is pleaſed to repreſent the doctrine of original ſin as an object of contempt or abhorrence. I beg leave to demur a little to the candour, the prudence, and the juſtice of this proceeding.

1. Was it *modeſt* or *candid* for a perſon without name or character, to talk in this ſupercilious manner of a doctrine that has been eſpouſed and defended by many of the greateſt and beſt men that the world ever ſaw, and makes an eſſential part of the eſtabliſhed creeds and confeſſions of all the Proteſtant churches without exception? I thought the grand modern plea had been freedom of ſentiment, and charitable thoughts of one another. Are ſo many of us, then, beyond the reach of this gentleman's charity? I do aſſure him that ſuch preſumption and ſelf-confidence are no recommendation to me, either of his character or ſentiments.

2. Was it *prudent*, when he was pleading a public cauſe, to ſpeak in ſuch opprobrious terms of a doctrine which he knew, or ought to have known, was believed and profeſſed by, I ſuppoſe, a great majority of very different denominations. Is this gentleman ignorant of human nature, as well as an enemy to the Chriſtian faith? Are men ſo little tenacious of their religious ſentiments, whether true or falſe? The prophet thought otherwiſe who ſaid, "Hath a nation changed their gods which yet are no gods?" Was it the way to obtain the favour of the public, to deſpiſe what they hold ſacred? Or ſhall we ſuppoſe this author ſo aſtoniſhingly ignorant, as to think that all men now, whoſe favour

* *Common Senſe, p.* 11. *Bradford's Edition.*

his own children. Whatever be the nature of the affliction with which he viſits either perſons, families, or nations; whatever be the diſpoſition or intention of thoſe whoſe malice he employs as a ſcourge; the deſign on his part is, to rebuke men for iniquity, to bring them to repentance, and to promote their holineſs and peace. The ſalutary nature and ſanctifying influence of affliction in general, is often taken notice of in Scripture, both as making a part of the purpoſe of God, and the experience of his ſaints. Heb. xii. 11. "Now, no affliction for the preſent ſeemeth to be joyous but grievous; nevertheleſs, afterwards it yieldeth the peaceable fruits of righteouſneſs unto them which are exercised thereby." But what we are particularly led to obſerve by the ſubject of this diſcourſe is, that the wrath of man, or the violence of the oppreſſor that praiſeth God in this reſpect, has a peculiar tendency to alarm the ſecure conſcience, to convince and humble the obſtinate ſinner. This is plain from the na-

is worth aſking, have given up the doctrine of the New Teſtament? If he does, he is greatly miſtaken.

3. In fine I aſk, where was the *juſtice* of this proceeding? Is there ſo little to be ſaid for the doctrine of original ſin, that it is not to be refuted but deſpiſed? Is the ſtate of the world ſuch as to render this doctrine not only falſe but incredible? Has the fruit been of ſuch a quality as to exclude all doubts of the goodneſs of the tree? On the contrary, I cannot help being of opinion, that ſuch has been the viſible ſtate of the world in every age, as cannot be accounted for on any other principles than what we learn from the word of God, that "the imagination of the heart of man is only evil from his youth, and that continually," Gen. vi. 5. viii. 21.

ture of the thing, and from the teſtimony of experience. Public calamities, particularly the deſtroying ſword, is ſo awful that it cannot but have a powerful influence in leading men to conſider the preſence and the power of God. It threatens them not only in themſelves, but touches them in all that is dear to them, whether relations or poſſeſſions. The prophet Iſaiah ſays, Iſa. xxvi. 8, 9. "Yea, in the way of thy judgments, O Lord, have we waited for thee; for when thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteouſneſs." He conſiders it as the moſt powerful mean of alarming the ſecure and ſubduing the obſtinate. Iſa. xxvi. 11. "Lord, when thy hand is lifted up they will not ſee, but they ſhall ſee and be aſhamed for their envy at the people, yea the fire of thine enemies ſhall devour them." It is alſo ſometimes repreſented as a ſymptom of a hopeleſs and irrecoverable ſtate, when public judgments have no effect. Thus ſays the prophet Jeremiah, Jer. v. 3. "O Lord, are not thine eyes upon the truth? Thou haſt ſtricken them, but they have not grieved; thou haſt conſumed them, but they have refuſed to receive correction; they have made their faces harder than a rock, they have refuſed to return." We can eaſily ſee in the hiſtory of the children of Iſrael, how ſevere ſtrokes brought them to ſubmiſſion and penitence. Pſal. lxxviii. 34, 35. "When he ſlew them, then they ſought him, and they returned and inquired early after God, and they remembered that God was their rock, and the high God their redeemer."

Both nations in general, and private perſons, are apt to grow remiſs and lax in a time of proſperity

and ſeeming ſecurity; but when their earthly comforts are endangered or withdrawn, it lays them under a kind of neceſſity to ſeek for ſomething better in their place. Men muſt have comfort from one quarter or another. When earthly things are in a pleaſing and promiſing condition, too many are apt to find their reſt, and be ſatisfied with them as their only portion. But when the vanity and paſſing nature of all created comfort is diſcovered, they are compelled to look for ſomething more durable as well as valuable. What therefore can be more to the praiſe of God, than that when a whole people have forgotten their reſting-place, when they have abuſed their privileges, and deſpiſed their mercies, they ſhould by diſtreſs and ſuffering be made to hearken to the rod, and return to their duty?

There is an inexpreſſible depth and variety in the judgments of God, as in all his other works; but we may lay down this as a certain principle, that if there were no ſin there could be no ſuffering. Therefore they are certainly for the correction of ſin, or for the trial, illuſtration, and perfecting of the grace and virtue of his own people. We are not to ſuppoſe, that thoſe who ſuffer moſt, or who ſuffer ſooneſt, are therefore more criminal than others. Our Saviour himſelf thought it neceſſary to give a caution againſt this raſh concluſion, as we are informed by the evangeliſt Luke: Luke xiii. 1. "There were preſent at that ſeaſon ſome that told him of the Galileans, whoſe blood Pilate had mingled with their ſacrifices. And Jeſus anſwering ſaid unto them, Suppoſe ye that theſe Galileans were ſinners above all the Galileans, becauſe they ſuffered ſuch things?

I tell you nay, but except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh." I ſuppoſe we may ſay with ſufficient warrant, that it often happens that thoſe for whom God hath deſigns of the greateſt mercy, are firſt brought to the trial, that they may enjoy in due time the ſalutary effect of the unpalatable medicine.

I muſt alſo take leave to obſerve, and I hope no pious humble ſufferer will be unwilling to make the application, that there is often a diſcernible mixture of ſovereignty and righteouſneſs in providential diſpenſations. It is the prerogative of God to do what he will with his own, but he often diſplays his juſtice itſelf, by throwing into the furnace thoſe who, though they may not be viſibly worſe than others, may yet have more to anſwer for, as having been favoured with more diſtinguiſhed privileges, both civil and ſacred. It is impoſſible for us to make a juſt and full compariſon of the character either of perſons or nations, and it would be extremely fooliſh for any to attempt it, either for increaſing their own ſecurity, or impeaching the juſtice of the ſupreme Ruler. Let us therefore neither forget the truth, nor go beyond it. "His mercy fills the earth." He is alſo "known by the judgment which he executeth." The wrath of man, in its moſt tempeſtuous rage, fulfils his will, and finally promotes the good of his choſen.

3. The wrath of man praiſeth God, as he ſets bounds to it, or reſtrains it by his providence, and ſometimes makes it evidently a mean of promoting and illuſtrating his glory.

There is no part of divine providence in which a greater beauty and majeſty appears, than when the Almighty Ruler turns the counſels of wicked men into confuſion, and makes them militate againſt themſelves. If the Pſalmiſt may be thought to have had a view in this text to the truths illuſtrated in the two former obſervations, there is no doubt at all that he had a particular view to this, as he ſays in the latter part of the verſe, "the remainder of wrath ſhalt thou reſtrain." The Scripture abounds with inſtances in which the deſigns of oppreſſors were either wholly diſappointed, or in execution fell far ſhort of the malice of their intention, and in ſome they turned out to the honour and happineſs of the perſons or the people whom they were intended to deſtroy. We have an inſtance of the firſt of theſe in the hiſtory to which my text relates *. We have alſo an inſtance in Eſther, in which the moſt miſchievous deſigns of Haman the ſon of Hammedatha the Agagite, againſt Mordecai the Jew, and the nation from which he ſprung, turned out at laſt to his own deſtruction, the honour of Mordecai, and the ſalvation and peace of his people.

From the New Teſtament I will make choice of that memorable event on which the ſalvation of believers in every age reſts as its foundation, the death and ſufferings of the Son of God. This the great adverſary, and all his agents and inſtruments, proſecuted with unrelenting rage. When they had blackened him with ſlander, when they ſcourged him with ſhame, when they had condemned him in judg-

* The matter is fully ſtated and reaſoned upon by the prophet Iſaiah, chap. x. from the 5th to the 19th verſe.

ment, and nailed him to the croſs, how could they help eſteeming their victory complete? But O the unſearchable wiſdom of God! they were but perfecting the great deſign laid for the ſalvation of ſinners. Our bleſſed Redeemer by his death finiſhed his work, overcame principalities and powers, and made a ſhew of them openly, triumphing over them in his croſs. With how much juſtice do the apoſtles and their company offer this doxology to God: "They lift up their voice with one accord, and ſaid, Lord, thou art God, which haſt made heaven and earth, and the ſea, and all that in them is; who by the mouth of thy ſervant David haſt ſaid, Why did the heathen rage, and the people imagine vain things? The kings of the earth ſtood up, and the rulers were gathered together againſt the Lord, and againſt his Chriſt. For of a truth, againſt thy holy child Jeſus, whom thou haſt anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Iſrael were gathered together, for to do whatſoever thy hand and thy counſel determined before to be done," Acts iv. 24. 28.

In all after ages, in conformity to this, the deepeſt laid contrivances of the prince of darkneſs, have turned out to the confuſion of their author; and I know not but, conſidering his malice and pride, this perpetual diſappointment, and the ſuperiority of divine wiſdom, may be one great ſource of his ſuffering and torment. The croſs hath ſtill been the banner of truth, under which it hath been carried through the world. Perſecution has been but as the furnace to the gold, to purge it of its droſs, to manifeſt its purity, and increaſe its luſtre. It was

taken notice of very early, that the blood of the martyrs was the ſeed of Chriſtianity; the more abundantly it was ſhed, the more plentifully did the harveſt grow.

So certain has this appeared, that the moſt violent infidels, both of early and later ages, have endeavoured to account for it, and have obſerved, that there is a ſpirit of obſtinacy in man which inclines him to reſiſt violence, and that ſeverity doth but increaſe oppoſition, be the cauſe what it will. They ſuppoſe that perſecution is equally proper to propagate truth and error. This, though in part true, will by no means generally hold. Such an apprehenſion, however, gave occaſion to a glorious triumph of divine providence of an oppoſite kind, which I muſt ſhortly relate to you. One of the Roman emperors, Julian, ſurnamed the apoſtate, perceiving how impoſſible it was to ſuppreſs the goſpel by violence, endeavoured to extinguiſh it by neglect and ſcorn. He left the Chriſtians unmoleſted for ſome time, but gave all manner of encouragement to thoſe of oppoſite principles, and particularly to the Jews, out of hatred to the Chriſtians; and that he might bring public diſgrace upon the Galileans, as he affected to ſtyle them, he encouraged the Jews to rebuild the temple of Jeruſalem, and viſibly refute the prophecy of Chriſt, that it ſhould lie under perpetual deſolation. But this profane attempt was ſo ſignally fruſtrated, that it ſerved, as much as any one circumſtance, to ſpread the glory of our Redeemer, and eſtabliſh the faith of his ſaints. It is affirmed by ſome ancient authors, particularly by Ammianus Marcellinus, a heathen hi-

ſtorian, that fire came out of the earth, and conſumed the workmen when laying the foundation. But in whatever way it was prevented, it is beyond all controverſy, from the concurring teſtimony of Heathens and Chriſtians, that little or no progreſs was ever made in it, and that in a ſhort time it was entirely defeated.

It is proper here to obſerve, that at the time of the Reformation, when religion began to revive, nothing contributed more to facilitate its reception, and increaſe its progreſs, than the violence of its perſecutors. Their cruelty, and the patience of the ſufferers, naturally diſpoſed men to examine and weigh the cauſe to which they adhered with ſo much conſtancy and reſolution. At the ſame time alſo, when they were perſecuted in one city, they fled to another, and carried the diſcoveries of popiſh fraud to every part of the world. It was by ſome of thoſe who were perſecuted in Germany, that the light of the Reformation was brought ſo early into Britain.

The power of divine providence appears with the moſt diſtinguiſhed luſtre, when ſmall and inconſiderable circumſtances, and ſometimes the weather and ſeaſons, have defeated the moſt formidable armaments, and fruſtrated the beſt concerted expeditions. Near two hundred years ago, the monarchy of Spain was in the height of its power and glory, and determined to cruſh the intereſt of the Reformation. They ſent out a powerful armament againſt Britain, giving it oſtentatiouſly, and in my opinion profanely, the name of the Invincible Armada. But it

pleaſed God ſo entirely to diſcomfit it by tempeſts, that a ſmall part of it returned home, though no Britiſh force had been oppoſed to it at all.

We have a remarkable inſtance of the influence of ſmall circumſtances in providence in the Engliſh hiſtory. The two moſt remarkable perſons in the civil wars had earneſtly deſired to withdraw themſelves from the contentions of the times, Mr Hampden and Oliver Cromwell. They had actually taken their paſſage in a ſhip for New England, when, by an arbitrary order of Council they were compelled to remain at home. The conſequence of this was, that one of them was the ſoul of the republican oppoſition to monarchical uſurpation during the civil wars, and the other in the courſe of that conteſt, was the great inſtrument in bringing the tyrant to the block.

The only other hiſtorical remark I am to make is, that the violent perſecution which many eminent Chriſtians met with in England from their brethren, who called themſelves Proteſtants, drove them in great numbers to a diſtant part of the world, where the light of the goſpel and true religion were unknown. Some of the American ſettlements, particularly thoſe in New England, were chiefly made by them; and as they carried the knowledge of Chriſt to the dark places of the earth, ſo they continue themſelves in as great a degree of purity, of faith, and ſtrictneſs of practice, or rather a greater, than is to be found in any Proteſtant church now in the world. Does not the wrath of man in this inſtance praiſe God? Was not the accuſer of the brethren, who ſtirs up their enemies, thus taken in his

own craftineſs, and his kingdom ſhaken by the very means which he employed to eſtabliſh it *.

II. I proceed now to the ſecond general head, which was to apply the principles illuſtrated above to our preſent ſituation, by inferences of truth for your inſtruction and comfort, and by ſuitable exhortations to duty in this important criſis. And,

In the firſt place, I would take the opportunity on this occaſion, and from this ſubject, to preſs every hearer to a ſincere concern for his own ſoul's ſalvation. There are times when the mind may be expected to be more awake to divine truth, and the conſcience more open to the arrows of conviction than at others. A ſeaſon of public judgment is of this kind, as appears from what has been already ſaid. That curioſity and attention at leaſt are raiſed in ſome degree, is plain from the unuſual throng of this aſſembly. Can you have a clearer view of the ſinfulneſs of your nature, than when the rod of the oppreſſor is lifted up, and when you ſee men putting on the habit of the warrior, and collecting on every hand the weapons of hoſtility and inſtruments of death? I do not blame your ardour in preparing for the reſolute defence of your temporal rights; but

* Leſt this ſhould be thought a temporiſing compliment to the people of New England, who have been the firſt ſufferers in the preſent conteſt, and have ſet ſo noble an example of invincible fortitude, in withſtanding the violence of oppreſſion, I think it proper to obſerve, that the whole paragraph is copied from a ſermon on Pſal. lxxiv. 22. prepared and preached in Scotland, in the month of Auguſt 1758.

conſider, I beſeech you, the truly infinite importance of the ſalvation of your ſouls. Is it of much moment whether you and your children ſhall be rich or poor, at liberty or in bonds? Is it of much moment whether this beautiful country ſhall increaſe in fruitfulneſs from year to year, being cultivated by active induſtry, and poſſeſſed by independent freemen, or the ſcanty produce of the neglected fields ſhall be eaten up by hungry publicans, while the timid owner trembles at the tax-gatherer's approach? And is it of leſs moment, my brethren, whether you ſhall be the heirs of glory or the heirs of hell? Is your ſtate on earth for a few fleeting years of ſo much moment? And is it of leſs moment what ſhall be your ſtate through endleſs ages! Have you aſſembled together willingly to hear what ſhall be ſaid on public affairs, and to join in imploring the bleſſing of God on the counſels and arms of the United Colonies, and can you be unconcerned what ſhall become of you for ever, when all the monuments of human greatneſs ſhall be laid in aſhes, for "the earth itſelf, and all the works that are therein ſhall be burnt up."

Wherefore, my beloved hearers, as the miniſtry of reconciliation is committed to me, I beſeech you in the moſt earneſt manner, to attend to "the things that belong to your peace, before they are hid from your eyes." How ſoon, and in what manner a ſeal ſhall be ſet upon the character and ſtate of every perſon here preſent, it is impoſſible to know; for he who only can know, does not think proper to reveal it. But you may reſt aſſured, that there is no time more ſuitable, and there is none ſo ſafe as that

which is preſent, ſince it is wholly uncertain whether any other ſhall be yours. Thoſe who ſhall firſt fall in battle, have not many more warnings to receive. There are ſome few daring and hardened ſinners, who deſpiſe eternity itſelf, and ſet their Maker at defiance; but the far greater number, by ſtaving off their convictions to a more convenient ſeaſon, have been taken unprepared, and thus eternally loſt. I would therefore earneſtly preſs the apoſtle's exhortation, 2 Cor. vi. 1, 2. "We then, as workers together with him, beſeech you alſo, that ye receive not the grace of God in vain: For he ſaith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of ſalvation have I ſuccoured thee. Behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of ſalvation."

Suffer me to beſeech you, or rather to give you warning, not to reſt ſatisfied with a form of godlineſs, denying the power thereof. There can be no true religion, till there be a diſcovery of your loſt ſtate by nature and practice, and an unfeigned acceptance of Chriſt Jeſus, as he is offered in the goſpel. Unhappy they who either deſpiſe his mercy, or are aſhamed of his croſs. Believe it, "There is no ſalvation in any other." "There is no other name under heaven given amongſt men by which we muſt be ſaved." Unleſs you are united to him by a lively faith, not the reſentment of a haughty monarch, but the ſword of divine juſtice hangs over you, and the fulneſs of divine vengeance ſhall ſpeedily overtake you. I do not ſpeak this only to the heaven-daring profligate or grovelling ſenſualiſt, but to every inſenſible, ſecure ſinner; to all thoſe, how-

ever decent and orderly in their civil deportment, who live to themſelves, and have their part and portion in this life; in fine, to all who are yet in a ſtate of nature, for "except a man be born again, he cannot ſee the kingdom of God." The fear of man may make you hide your profanity; prudence and experience may make you abhor intemperance and riot; as you advance in life one vice may ſupplant another and hold its place; but nothing leſs than the ſovereign grace of God can produce a ſaving change of heart and temper, or fit you for his immediate preſence.

2. From what has been ſaid upon this ſubject, you may ſee what groſud there is to give praiſe to God for his favours already beſtowed on us, reſpecting the public cauſe. It would be a criminal inattention not to obſerve the ſingular interpoſition of Providence hitherto, in behalf of the American colonies. It is however impoſſible for me, in a ſingle diſcourſe, as well as improper at this time, to go through every ſtep of our paſt tranſactions; I muſt therefore content myſelf with a few remarks. How many diſcoveries have been made of the deſigns of enemies in Britain, and among ourſelves, in a manner as unexpected to us as to them, and in ſuch ſeaſon as to prevent their effect! What ſurpriſing ſucceſs has attended our encounters in almoſt every inſtance! Has not the boaſted diſcipline of regular and veteran ſoldiers been turned into confuſion and diſmay, before the new and maiden courage of freemen, in defence of their property and right? In what great mercy has blood been ſpared on the ſide of this injured country! Some important victories

in the ſouth have been gained with ſo little loſs, that enemies will probably think it has been diſſembled, as many even of ourſelves thought, till time rendered it undeniable. But theſe were comparatively of ſmall moment. The ſignal advantage we have gained by the evacuation of Boſton, and the ſhameful flight of the army and navy of Britain, was brought about without the loſs of a man. To all this we may add, that the counſels of our enemies have been viſibly confounded, ſo that I believe I may ſay with truth, that there is hardly any ſtep which they have taken, but it has operated ſtrongly againſt themſelves, and been more in our favour than if they had followed a contrary courſe.

While we give praiſe to God, the ſupreme Diſpoſer of all events, for his interpoſition in our behalf, let us guard againſt the dangerous error of truſting in, or boaſting of an arm of fleſh. I could earneſtly wiſh, that while our arms are crowned with ſucceſs, we might content ourſelves with a modeſt aſcription of it to the power of the Higheſt. It has given me great uneaſineſs to read ſome oſtentatious, vaunting expreſſions in our newſpapers, though happily, I think, much reſtrained of late. Let us not return to them again. If I am not miſtaken, not only the Holy Scriptures in general, and the truths of the glorious goſpel in particular, but the whole courſe of providence, ſeem intended to abaſe the pride of man, and lay the vain-glorious in the duſt. How many inſtances does hiſtory furniſh us with of thoſe who, after exulting over and deſpiſing their enemies, were ſignally and ſhamefully de-

feated *. The truth is, I believe, the remark may be applied univerſally, and we may ſay, that through the whole frame of nature, and the whole ſyſtem of human life, that which promiſes moſt, performs the leaſt. The flowers of fineſt colour ſeldom have the ſweeteſt fragrance. The trees of quickeſt growth or faireſt form, are ſeldom of the greateſt value or duration. Deep waters move with leaſt noiſe. Men who think moſt are ſeldom talkative. And I think it holds as much in war as in any thing, that every boaſter is a coward.

Pardon me, my brethren, for inſiſting ſo much upon this, which may ſeem but an immaterial circumſtance. It is in my opinion of very great moment. I look upon oſtentation and confidence to be a ſort of outrage upon providence, and when it becomes general, and infuſes itſelf into the ſpirit of a people, it is a forerunner of deſtruction. How does Goliah the champion, armed in a moſt formidable manner, expreſs his diſdain of David the ſtripling, with his ſling and his ſtone: 1 Sam. xvii. 42, 43, 44, 45. "And when the Philiſtine looked about and ſaw David, he diſdained him; for he was but a youth, and ruddy, and of a fair countenance. And the Philiſtine ſaid unto David, Am I a dog that thou comeſt to me with ſtaves? And the Philiſtine curſed David by his gods; and the Philiſtine ſaid to David, Come to me, and I will give thy fleſh unto

* There is no ſtory better known in Britiſh hiſtory, than that the officers of the French army, the night preceding the battle of Agincourt, played at dice for Engliſh priſoners before they took them, and the next day were taken by them.

the fowls of the air, and to the beaſts of the field." But how juſt and modeſt the reply! "Then ſaid David to the Philiſtine, Thou comeſt to me with a ſword, and with a ſpear, and with a ſhield, but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of hoſts, the God of the armies of Iſrael, whom thou haſt defied." I was well pleaſed with a remark of this kind thirty years ago in a pamphlet *, in which it was obſerved, that there was a great deal of profane oſtentation in the names given to ſhips of war, as the Victory, the Valiant, the Thunderer, the Dreadnought, the Terrible, the Firebrand, the Furnace, the Lightning, the Infernal, and many more of the ſame kind. This the author conſidered as a ſymptom of the national character and manners very unfavourable, and not likely to obtain the bleſſing of the God of heaven †.

* Britain's Remembrancer.

† I am ſenſible that one or two of theſe were ſhips taken from the French, which brought their names with them. But the greateſt number had their names impoſed in England, and I cannot help obſerving, that the Victory, often celebrated as the fineſt ſhip ever built in Britain, was loſt in the night without a ſtorm, by ſome unknown accident, and about twelve hundred perſons, many of them of the firſt families in the nation, were buried with it in the deep. I do not mean to infer any thing from this, but that we ought to live under the practical perſuaſion of what no man will doctrinally deny, that there is no warring with the elements, or him who directs their force; that he is able to write diſappointment on the wiſeſt human ſchemes, and by the word of his power to fruſtrate the efforts of the greateſt monarch upon earth.

3. From what has been ſaid you may learn what encouragement you have to put your truſt in God, and hope for his aſſiſtance in the preſent important conflict. He is the Lord of hoſts, great in might, and ſtrong in battle. Whoever hath his countenance and approbation, ſhall have the beſt at laſt. I do not mean to ſpeak prophetically, but agreeably to the analogy of faith, and the principles of God's moral government. Some have obſerved that true religion, and in her train dominion, riches, literature and arts, have taken their courſe in a ſlow and gradual manner, from eaſt to weſt, ſince the earth was ſettled after the flood, and from thence forbode the future glory of America. I leave this as a matter rather of conjecture than certainty, but obſerve, that if your cauſe is juſt, if your principles are pure, and if your conduct is prudent, you need not fear the multitude of oppoſing hoſts.

If your cauſe is juſt, you may look with confidence to the Lord, and intreat him to plead it as his own. You are all my witneſſes, that this is the firſt time of my introducing any political ſubject into the pulpit. At this ſeaſon, however, it is not only lawful but neceſſary, and I willingly embrace the opportunity of declaring my opinion without any heſitation, that the cauſe in which America is now in arms, is the cauſe of juſtice, of liberty, and of human nature. So far as we have hitherto proceeded, I am ſatisfied that the confederacy of the colonies has not been the effect of pride, reſentment, or ſedition, but of a deep and general conviction that our civil and religious liberties, and conſequently in a great meaſure the temporal and eternal

happineſs of us and our poſterity, depended on the iſſue. The knowledge of God and his truths have from the beginning of the world been chiefly, if not entirely confined to thoſe parts of the earth where ſome degree of liberty and political juſtice were to be ſeen, and great were the difficulties with which they had to ſtruggle, from the imperfection of human ſociety, and the unjuſt deciſions of uſurped authority. There is not a ſingle inſtance in hiſtory, in which civil liberty was loſt, and religious liberty preſerved entire. If therefore we yield up our temporal property, we at the ſame time deliver the conſcience into bondage.

You ſhall not, my brethren, hear from me in the pulpit, what you have never heard from me in converſation, I mean railing at the king perſonally, or even his miniſters and the parliament, and people of Britain, as ſo many barbarous ſavages. Many of their actions have probably been worſe than their intentions. That they ſhould deſire unlimited dominion, if they can obtain or preſerve it, is neither new nor wonderful. I do not refuſe ſubmiſſion to their unjuſt claims, becauſe they are corrupt or profligate, although probably many of them are ſo, but becauſe they are men, and therefore liable to all the ſelfiſh bias inſeparable from human nature. I call this claim unjuſt, of making laws to bind us in all caſes whatſoever, becauſe they are ſeparated from us, independent of us, and have an intereſt in oppoſing us. Would any man who could prevent it, give up his eſtate, perſon and family, to the diſpoſal of his neighbour, although he had liberty to chuſe the wiſeſt and the beſt maſter? Surely not. This

is the true and proper hinge of the controverſy between Great Britain and America. It is however to be added, that ſuch is their diſtance from us, that a wiſe and prudent adminiſtration of our affairs is as impoſſible as the claim of authority is unjuſt. Such is and muſt be their ignorance of the ſtate of things here, ſo much time muſt elapſe before an error can be ſeen and remedied, and ſo much injuſtice and partiality muſt be expected from the arts and miſrepreſentation of intereſted perſons, that for theſe colonies to depend wholly upon the Legiſlature of Great Britain, would be like many other oppreſſive connexions, injury to the maſter, and ruin to the ſlave.

The management of the war itſelf on their part would furniſh new proof of this, if any were needful. Is it not manifeſt with what abſurdity and impropriety they have conducted their own deſigns? We had nothing ſo much to fear as diſſention, and they have by wanton and unneceſſary cruelty forced us into union. At the ſame time, to let us ſee what we have to expect, and what would be the fatal conſequence of unlimited ſubmiſſion, they have uniformly called thoſe acts *lenity*, which filled this whole continent with reſentment and horror. The ineffable diſdain expreſſed by our fellow ſubject in ſaying, 'That he would not hearken to America till ſhe was at his feet,' has armed more men, and inſpired more deadly rage, than could have been done by laying waſte a whole province with fire and ſword. Again, we wanted not numbers but time, and they ſent over handful after handful, till we were ready to oppoſe a multitude greater than they

have to ſend. In fine, if there was one place ſtronger than the reſt, and more able and willing to reſiſt, there they made the attack, and left the others till they were duly informed, completely incenſed, and fully furniſhed with every inſtrument of war.

I mention theſe things, my brethren, not only as grounds of confidence in God, who can eaſily overthrow the wiſdom of the wiſe, but as deciſive proofs of the impoſſibility of theſe great and growing ſtates being ſafe and happy, when every part of their internal polity is dependent on Great Britain. If, on account of their diſtance and ignorance of our ſituation, they could not conduct their own quarrel with propriety for one year, how can they give direction and vigour to every department of our civil conſtitutions, from age to age? There are fixed bounds to every human thing. When the branches of a tree grow very large and weighty, they fall off from the trunk. The ſharpeſt ſword will not pierce when it cannot reach. And there is a certain diſtance from the ſeat of government, where an attempt to rule will either produce tyranny and helpleſs ſubjection, or provoke reſiſtance and effect a ſeparation.

I have ſaid, if your principles are pure—The meaning of this is, if your preſent oppoſition to the claims of the Britiſh miniſtry does not ariſe from a ſeditious and turbulent ſpirit, or a wanton contempt of legal authority; from a blind and factious attachment to particular perſons or parties; or from a ſelfiſh rapacious diſpoſition, and a deſire to turn public confuſion to private profit—but from a con-

cern for the intereſt of your country, and the ſafety of yourſelves and your poſterity. On this ſubject I cannot help obſerving, that though it would be a miracle if there were not many ſelfiſh perſons among us, and diſcoveries now and then made of mean and intereſted tranſactions, yet they have been comparatively inconſiderable, both in number and effect. In general there has been ſo great a degree of public ſpirit, that we have much more reaſon to be thankful for its vigour and prevalence, than to wonder at the few appearances of diſhoneſty or diſaffection. It would be very uncandid to aſcribe the univerſal ardour that has prevailed among all ranks of men, and the ſpirited exertions in the moſt diſtant colonies, to any thing elſe than public ſpirit. Nor was there ever perhaps in hiſtory ſo general a commotion, from which religious differences have been ſo entirely excluded. Nothing of this kind has as yet been heard, except of late in the abſurd, but malicious and deteſtable attempts of our few remaining enemies to introduce them. At the ſame time I muſt alſo, for the honour of this country, obſerve, that though government in the ancient forms has been ſo long unhinged, and in ſome colonies not ſufficient care taken to ſubſtitute another in its place, yet has there been, by common conſent, a much greater degree of order and public peace, than men of reflection and experience foretold or expected. From all theſe circumſtances I conclude favourably of the principles of the friends of liberty, and do earneſtly exhort you to adopt and act upon thoſe which have been deſcribed, and reſiſt the influence of every other.

Once more, If to the juſtice of your cauſe, and the purity of your principles, you add prudence in your conduct, there will be the greateſt reaſon to hope, by the bleſſing of God, for proſperity and ſucceſs. By prudence in conducting this important ſtruggle, I have chiefly in view union, firmneſs, and patience. Every body muſt perceive the abſolute neceſſity of union. It is indeed in every body's mouth, and therefore, inſtead of attempting to convince you of its importance, I will only caution you againſt the uſual cauſes of diviſion. If perſons of every rank, inſtead of implicitly complying with the orders of thoſe whom they themſelves have choſen to direct, will needs judge every meaſure over again, when it comes to be put in execution; if different claſſes of men intermix their little private views, or claſhing intereſt with public affairs, and marſhal into parties, the merchant againſt the landholder, and the landholder againſt the merchant; if local provincial pride and jealouſy ariſe, and you allow yourſelves to ſpeak with contempt of the courage, character, manners, or even language of particular places, you are doing a greater injury to the common cauſe, than you are aware of. If ſuch practices are admitted among us, I ſhall look upon it as one of the moſt dangerous ſymptoms, and if they become general, a preſage of approaching ruin.

By firmneſs and patience I mean a reſolute adherence to your duty, and laying your account with many difficulties, as well as occaſional diſappointments. In a former part of this diſcourſe I have cautioned you againſt oſtentation and vain-glory.

Be pleaſed farther to obſerve, that extremes often beget one another; the ſame perſons who exult extravagantly on ſucceſs, are generally moſt liable to deſpondent timidity on every little inconſiderable defeat. Men of this character are the bane and corruption of every ſociety or party to which they belong, but they are eſpecially the ruin of an army, if ſuffered to continue in it. Remember the viciſſitude of human things, and the uſual courſe of providence. How often has a juſt cauſe been reduced to the loweſt ebb, and yet when firmly adhered to, has become finally triumphant! I ſpeak this now while the affairs of the colonies are in ſo proſperous a ſtate, leſt this proſperity itſelf ſhould render you leſs able to bear unexpected misfortunes.—The ſum of the whole is, that the bleſſing of God is only to be looked for by thoſe who are not wanting in the diſcharge of their own duty. I would neither have you to truſt in an arm of fleſh, nor ſit with folded hands and expect that miracles ſhould be wrought in your defence. This is a ſin which is in Scripture ſtyled tempting God. In oppoſition to it, I would exhort you as Joab did the hoſt of Iſrael, who, though he does not appear to have had a ſpotleſs character throughout, certainly in this inſtance ſpoke like a prudent general and a pious man. 2 Sam. x. 12. "Be of good courage, and let us behave ourſelves valiantly for our people, and for the cities of our God, and let the Lord do that which is good in his ſight."

I ſhall now conclude this diſcourſe by ſome exhortations to duty, founded upon the truths which

have been illuſtrated above, and ſuited to the intereſting ſtate of this country at the preſent time; and,

1. Suffer me to recommend to you an attention to the public intereſt of religion, or, in other words, zeal for the glory of God and the good of others. I have already endeavoured to exhort ſinners to repentance; what I have here in view is to point out to you the concern which every good man ought to take in the national character and manners, and the means which he ought to uſe for promoting public virtue, and bearing down impiety and vice. This is a matter of the utmoſt moment, and which ought to be well underſtood, both in its nature and principles. Nothing is more certain, than that a general profligacy and corruption of manners make a people ripe for deſtruction. A good form of government may hold the rotten materials together for ſome time, but beyond a certain pitch, even the beſt conſtitution will be ineffectual, and ſlavery muſt enſue. On the other hand, when the manners of a nation are pure, when true religion and internal principles maintain their vigour, the attempts of the moſt powerful enemies to oppreſs them, are commonly baffled and diſappointed. This will be found equally certain, whether we conſider the great principles of God's moral government, or the operation and influence of natural cauſes.

What follows from this? That he is the beſt friend to American liberty, who is moſt ſincere and active in promoting true and undefiled religion, and who ſets himſelf with the greateſt firmneſs to bear down profanity and immorality of every kind.

Whoever is an avowed enemy to God, I ſcruple not to call him an enemy to his country. Do not ſuppoſe, my brethren, that I mean to recommend a furious and angry zeal for the circumſtantials of religion, or the contentions of one ſect with another about their peculiar diſtinctions. I do not wiſh you to oppoſe any body's religion, but every body's wickedneſs. Perhaps there are few ſurer marks of the reality of religion, than when a man feels himſelf more joined in ſpirit to a truly holy perſon of a different denomination, than to an irregular liver of his own. It is therefore your duty, in this important and critical ſeaſon, to exert yourſelves, every one in his proper ſphere, to ſtem the tide of prevailing vice, to promote the knowledge of God, the reverence of his name and worſhip, and obedience to his laws.

Perhaps you will aſk what it is that you are called to do for this purpoſe, farther than your own perſonal duty? I anſwer, this itſelf, when taken in its proper extent, is not a little. The nature and obligation of viſible religion is, I am afraid, little underſtood, and leſs attended to.

Many, from a real or pretended fear of the imputation of hypocriſy, baniſh from their converſation and carriage, every appearance of reſpect and ſubmiſſion to the living God. What a weakneſs and meanneſs of ſpirit does it diſcover, for a man to be aſhamed in the preſence of his fellow-ſinners to profeſs that reverence to almighty God which he inwardly feels. The truth is, he makes himſelf truly liable to the accuſation which he means to avoid. It is as genuine, and perhaps a more culpable hy-

pocriſy, to appear to have leſs religion than you really have, than to appear to have more. This falſe ſhame is a more extenſive evil than is commonly apprehended. We contribute conſtantly, though inſenſibly, to form each other's character and manners; and therefore the uſefulneſs of a ſtrictly holy and conſcientious deportment is not confined to the poſſeſſor, but ſpreads its happy influence to all that are within its reach. I need ſcarcely add, that in proportion as men are diſtinguiſhed by underſtanding, literature, age, rank, office, wealth, or any other circumſtance, their example will be uſeful on the one hand, or pernicious on the other.

But I cannot content myſelf with barely recommending a ſilent example. There is a dignity in virtue which is entitled to authority, and ought to claim it. In many caſes it is the duty of a good man, by open reproof and oppoſition, to wage war with profaneneſs. There is a Scripture precept delivered in very ſingular terms, to which I beg your attention: "Thou ſhalt not hate thy brother in thy heart, but ſhalt in any wiſe rebuke him, and not ſuffer ſin upon him." How prone are many to repreſent reproof as flowing from ill nature and ſurlineſs of temper! The Spirit of God, on the contrary, conſiders it as the effect of inward hatred, or want of genuine love, to forbear reproof, when it is neceſſary or may be uſeful. I am ſenſible there may in ſome caſes be a reſtraint from prudence, agreeably to that caution of our Saviour, "Caſt not your pearls before ſwine, leſt they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you." Of

this every man muſt judge as well as he can for himſelf; but certainly, either by open reproof, or expreſſive ſilence, or ſpeedy departure from ſuch ſociety, we ought to guard againſt being partakers of other mens ſins.

To this let me add, that if all men are bound in ſome degree, certain claſſes of men are under peculiar obligations to the diſcharge of this duty. Magiſtrates, miniſters, parents, heads of families, and thoſe whom age has rendered venerable, are called to uſe their authority and influence for the glory of God and the good of others. Bad men themſelves diſcover an inward conviction of this, for they are often liberal in their reproaches of perſons of grave characters or religious profeſſion, if they bear with patience the profanity of others. Inſtead of enlarging on the duty of men in authority in general, I muſt particularly recommend this matter to thoſe who have the command of ſoldiers inliſted for the defence of their country. The cauſe is ſacred, and the champions for it ought to be holy. Nothing is more grieving to the heart of a good man, than to hear from thoſe who are going to the field, the horrid ſound of curſing and blaſphemy; it cools the ardour of his prayers, as well as abates his confidence and hope in God. Many more circumſtances affect me in ſuch a caſe than I can enlarge upon, or indeed eaſily enumerate at preſent; the glory of God, the intereſt of the deluded ſinner, going like a devoted victim, and imprecating vengeance on his own head, as well as the cauſe itſelf committed to his care. We have ſometimes taken the liberty to forebode the downfal of the Britiſh empire, from the corrup-

tion and degeneracy of the people. Unhappily the Britiſh ſoldiers have been diſtinguiſhed among all the nations in Europe, for the moſt ſhocking profanity. Shall we then pretend to emulate them in this infernal diſtinction, or rob them of the horrid privilege? God forbid. Let the officers of the army in every degree remember, that as military ſubjection, while it laſts, is the moſt complete of any, it is in their power greatly to reſtrain, if not wholly to baniſh this flagrant enormity.

2. I exhort all who are not called to go into the field, to apply themſelves with the utmoſt diligence to works of induſtry. It is in your power by this mean, not only to ſupply the neceſſities, but to add to the ſtrength of your country. Habits of induſtry prevailing in a ſociety, not only increaſe its wealth, as their immediate effect, but they prevent the introduction of many vices, and are intimately connected with ſobriety and good morals. Idleneſs is the mother or nurſe of almoſt every vice; and want, which is its inſeparable companion, urges men on to the moſt abandoned and deſtructive courſes. Induſtry, therefore, is a moral duty of the greateſt moment, abſolutely neceſſary to national proſperity, and the ſure way of obtaining the bleſſing of God. I would alſo obſerve, that in this, as in every other part of God's government, obedience to his will is as much a natural mean, as a meritorious cauſe of the advantage we wiſh to reap from it. Induſtry brings up a firm and hardy race. He who is inured to the labour of the field, is prepared for the fatigues of a campaign. The active farmer, who riſes with

the dawn, and follows his team or plough, muſt in the end be an overmatch for thoſe effeminate and delicate ſoldiers, who are nurſed in the lap of ſelf-indulgence, and whoſe greateſt exertion is in the important preparation for, and tedious attendance on a maſquerade or midnight ball.

3. In the laſt place, Suffer me to recommend to you frugality in your families, and every other article of expence. This the ſtate of things among us renders abſolutely neceſſary, and it ſtands in the moſt immediate connexion, both with virtuous induſtry, and active public ſpirit. Temperance in meals, moderation and decency in dreſs, furniture, and equipage, have, I think, generally been characteriſtics of a diſtinguiſhed patriot. And when the ſame ſpirit pervades a people in general, they are fit for every duty, and able to encounter the moſt formidable enemy. The general ſubject of the preceding diſcourſe has been the wrath of man praiſing God. If the unjuſt oppreſſion of your enemies, which withholds from you many of the uſual articles of luxury and magnificence, ſhall contribute to make you clothe yourſelves and your children with the works of your own hands, and cover your tables with the ſalutary productions of your own ſoil, it will be a new illuſtration of the ſame truth, and a real happineſs to yourſelves and your country.

I could wiſh to have every good thing done from the pureſt principles and the nobleſt views. Conſider, therefore, that the Chriſtian character, particularly the ſelf-denial of the goſpel, ſhould extend

to your whole deportment. In the early times of Chriſtianity, when adult converts were admitted to baptiſm, they were aſked among other queſtions, Do you renounce the world, its ſhews, its pomp, and its vanities? I do. The form of this is ſtill preſerved in the adminiſtration of baptiſm, where we renounce the devil, the world, and the fleſh. This certainly implies not only abſtaining from acts of groſs intemperance and exceſs, but a humility of carriage, a reſtraint and moderation in all your deſires. The ſame thing, as it is ſuitable to your Chriſtian profeſſion, is alſo neceſſary to make you truly independent in yourſelves, and to feed the ſource of liberality and charity to others, or to the public. The riotous and waſteful liver, whoſe craving appetites make him conſtantly needy, is, and muſt be ſubject to many maſters, according to the ſaying of Solomon, "The borrower is ſervant to the lender." But the frugal and moderate perſon, who guides his affairs with diſcretion, is able to aſſiſt in public councils by a free and unbiaſſed judgment, to ſupply the wants of his poor brethren, and ſometimes, by his eſtate and ſubſtance, to give important aid to a ſinking country.

Upon the whole, I beſeech you to make a wiſe improvement of the preſent threatening aſpect of public affairs, and to remember that your duty to God, to your country, to your families, and to yourſelves, is the ſame. True religion is nothing elſe but an inward temper and outward conduct ſuited to your ſtate and circumſtances in providence at any time. And as peace with God and conformity to

him, adds to the ſweetneſs of created comforts while we poſſeſs them, ſo in times of difficulty and trial, it is in the man of piety and inward principle, that we may expect to find the uncorrupted patriot, the uſeful citizen, and the invincible ſoldier.—God grant that in America true religion and civil liberty may be inſeparable, and that the unjuſt attempts to deſtroy the one, may in the iſſue tend to the ſupport and eſtabliſhment of both.

ADDRESS

TO THE

NATIVES OF SCOTLAND

RESIDING IN

AMERICA.

COUNTRYMEN AND FRIENDS,

AS ſoon as I had conſented to the publication of the foregoing ſermon, I felt an irreſiſtible deſire to accompany it with a few words addreſſed to you in particular. I am certain I feel the attachment of country as far as it is a virtuous or laudable principle; perhaps it would be nearer the truth to ſay, as far as it is a natural and pardonable prejudice. He who is ſo pleaſed may attribute it to this laſt when I ſay, that I have never ſeen cauſe to be aſhamed of the place of my birth; that ſince the revival of arts and letters in Europe, in the cloſe of the fourteenth, and beginning of the fifteenth cen-

tury, the natives of Scotland have not been inferior to thoſe of any other country, for genius, erudition, military proweſs, or any of thoſe accompliſhments which improve or embelliſh human nature. When to this it is added, that ſince my coming to America, at an advanced period of life, the friendſhip of my countrymen has been as much above my expectation as deſert, I hope every reader will conſider what is now to be offered, as the effect not only of unfeigned good will, but of the moſt ardent affection.

It has given me no little uneaſineſs to hear the word *Scotch* uſed as a term of reproach in the American controverſy, which could only be upon the ſuppoſition that ſtrangers of that country are more univerſally oppoſed to the liberties of America than thoſe who were born in South Britain, or in Ireland. I am ſenſible that this has been done in ſome newspapers and contemptible anonymous publications, in a manner that was neither warranted by truth, nor dictated by prudence. There are many natives of Scotland in this country, whoſe oppoſition to the unjuſt claims of Great Britain has been as early and uniform, founded upon as rational and liberal principles, and therefore likely to be as laſting as that of any ſet of men whatever. As to Great Britain itſelf, time has now fully diſcovered, that the real friends of America, in any part of that kingdom, were very few, and thoſe whoſe friendſhip was diſintereſted, and in no degree owing to their own political factions, ſtill fewer. The wiſe and valuable part of the nation were, and as yet are in a great meaſure ignorant of the ſtate of things in this coun-

try; neither is it eaſy for the bulk of a people to ſhake off their prejudices, and open their eyes upon the great principles of univerſal liberty. It is therefore at leaſt very diſputable, whether there is any juſt ground for the diſtinction between Scots and Engliſh on this ſubject at all.

This diſpute, however, I do not mean to enter upon, becauſe it is of too little moment to find a place here; but ſuppoſing that, in ſome provinces eſpecially, the natives of Scotland have been too much inclined to ſupport the uſurpations of the parent ſtate, I will firſt endeavour to account for it, by aſſigning ſome of its probable cauſes; and then offer a few conſiderations which ſhould induce them to wipe off the aſperſion entirely, by a contrary conduct.

As to the firſt of theſe, I will mention what I ſuppoſe to have been the firſt and radical cauſe, and which gave birth to every other, of the diſaffection of ſome of the natives of Scotland to the juſt privileges of America. What I have in view was the friends of liberty in many places of America taking the part of, and ſeeming to conſider themſelves as in a great meaſure engaged in the ſame cauſe with that very diſtinguiſhed perſon, John Wilkes, Eſq. of London. This was done not only in many writings and newſpaper diſſertations, but one or two colonies, in ſome of their moſt reſpectable meetings, manifeſted their attachment to him, and ſeemed to conſider him as their patron and friend. No. 45, which was the moſt offenſive Number of a worthleſs paper, was repeated and echoed, by the moſt ſilly and ridiculous alluſions to it, through every part of the country,

and by many who could not tell what was ſignified by the term.

It will not be neceſſary to ſay much on the prudence of ſuch conduct, becauſe I ſuppoſe thoſe who expected Wilkes's mob would pull down the Parliament-houſe, or that there would be inſurrections all over the kingdom in behalf of America, are by this time fully ſatisfied of their miſtake. It appears now in the cleareſt manner, that, till very lately, thoſe who ſeemed to take the part of America in the Britiſh Parliament, never did it on American principles. They either did not underſtand, or were not willing to admit the extent of our claim. Even the great Lord Chatham's bill for reconciliation would not have been accepted here, and did not materially differ from what the miniſtry would have conſented to. The truth is, the far greateſt part of the countenance given in Britain to the complaints of this country, was by thoſe who had no other intention in it, than to uſe them as an engine of oppoſition to the miniſtry for the time being. It is true, ſome of them have now learned to reaſon very juſtly, and upon the moſt liberal principles; but their number is not great, and it was not the caſe with any one ſpeaker or writer whoſe works I have had the opportunity of peruſing, till the very laſt ſtage of the quarrel.

What effect this Wilkiſm (if I may ſpeak ſo) of many Americans may be ſuppoſed to have had upon the minds of gentleman from Scotland, it is not difficult to explain. That gentleman and his aſſociates thought proper to found the whole of their oppoſition to the then miniſtry, upon a contempt

and hatred of the Scots nation; and by the moſt illiberal methods, and the moſt ſcandalous falſehoods, to ſtir up a national jealouſy between the northern and ſouthern parts of the iſland. There was not a vile term or hateful idea, which ancient vulgar animoſity had ever uſed, though long union had made them ſcarcely intelligible, which he did not rake up and attempt to bring into credit by writing and converſation. The conſequence of this is well known. Wilkes and ſome others were burnt in effigy in Scotland, and it produced ſo general an attachment to the king and miniſtry, as has not yet ſpent its force. In theſe circumſtances is it to be wondered at, that many who left Scotland within the laſt fifteen years, when they heard Wilkes and thoſe who adhered to him, extolled and celebrated by the ſons of liberty, ſhould be apt to conſider it as an evidence of the ſame ſpirit, and that they were engaged in ſupport of the ſame cauſe? Perhaps we may go a little higher with this remark, in tracing political appearances to their ſource. It is generally ſaid that the king himſelf has diſcovered a violent rancorous perſonal hatred againſt the Americans. If this be true, and I know nothing to the contrary, it may be eaſily accounted for upon the very ſame principles.

I am far from ſuppoſing that this was a good reaſon for any man's being cool to the American cauſe, which was as different from that of Wilkes as light is from darkneſs. It was indeed doing great diſhonour to the noble ſtruggle, to ſuppoſe it to have any connection with who ſhould be in or out of court-favour at London; and therefore it was always my

opinion, that thoſe who railed againſt the king and miniſtry only, did not carry the argument home, nor fully underſtand the nature of their own plea. In order to juſtify the American oppoſition, it is not neceſſary to ſhew that the perſons in power have invaded liberty in Britain; it is ſufficient to ſay that they, with the concurrence of the whole nation, have refuſed to ſuffer it to continue in the colonies.—This leads me to the ſecond part of my deſign, which was to lay before you the reaſons which I think ſhould induce every lover of juſtice and of mankind, not only to be a well-wiſher, but a firm and ſtedfaſt friend to America, in this important conteſt.

It has been often ſaid, that the preſent is likely to be an important era to America. I think we may ſay much more; it is likely to be an important era in the hiſtory of mankind. In the ancient migrations, a new country was generally ſettled by a ſmall, unconnected, and often an ignorant band. The people and the ſoil were alike uncultivated, and therefore they proceeded to improvement by very ſlow degrees; nay, many of them fell back, and degenerated into a ſtate vaſtly more ſavage than the people from whence they came. In America we ſee a rich and valuable ſoil, and an extenſive country, taken poſſeſſion of by the power, the learning, and the wealth of Europe. For this reaſon it is now exhibiting to the world a ſcene which was never ſeen before. It has had a progreſs in improvement and population ſo rapid, as no political calculators have been able to aſcertain. I look upon every thing that has been ſaid upon this ſubject to be mere conjecture, except in ſuch places as there

has been an actual numeration. When men ſay that America doubles its number in fifteen, twenty, or twenty-five years, they ſpeak by gueſs, and they ſay nothing. In ſome places that may be under or over the truth; but there are vaſt tracts of land that fill every year with inhabitants, and yet the old ſettled places ſtill continue to increaſe.

It is proper to obſerve, that the Britiſh ſettlements have been improved in a proportion far beyond the ſettlements of other European nations. To what can this be aſcribed? Not to the climate, for they are of all climates; not to the people, for they are a mixture of all nations. It muſt therefore be reſolved ſingly into the degree of Britiſh liberty which they brought from home, and which pervaded more or leſs their ſeveral conſtitutions. It has been repeated to us, I know not how often, by the mercenary ſhort-ſighted writers in favour of ſubmiſſion to, or re-union with Great Britain, that we have thriven much in paſt times by our dependence on the mother country, and therefore we ſhould be loath to part. Theſe writers forget that the very complaint is, that ſhe will not ſuffer us to enjoy our ancient rights. Can any paſt experience ſhew that we ſhall thrive under new impoſitions? I ſhould be glad any ſuch reaſoners would attempt to prove that we have thriven by our dependence, and not by the degree of independence which we have hitherto enjoyed. If we have thriven by our dependence, I conceive it is a neceſſary conſequence, that thoſe provinces muſt have thriven moſt which have been moſt dependent. But the contrary is ſelf-evident. Thoſe which have hitherto enjoyed the freeſt form

of government, though greatly inferior in ſoil and climate, have yet outſtripped the others in number of people and value of land, merely becauſe the laſt were more under the influence of appointments and authority from home.

When this is the undeniable ſtate of things, can any perſon of a liberal mind wiſh that theſe great and growing countries ſhould be brought back to a ſtate of ſubjection to a diſtant power? And can any man deny, that if they had yielded to the claims of the Britiſh Parliament, they would have been no better than a parcel of tributary ſtates, ruled by lordly tyrants, and exhauſted by unfeeling penſioners, under the commiſſion of one too diſtant to hear the cry of oppreſſion, and ſurrounded by thoſe who had an intereſt in deceiving him? It ought therefore, in my opinion, to meet with the cordial approbation of every impartial perſon, as I am confident it will of poſterity, that they have united for common defence, and reſolved that they will be both free and independent, becauſe they cannot be the one without the other.

As this meaſure, long foreſeen, has now taken place, I ſhall beg leave to ſay a few things upon it, in which I mean to ſhew—1. That it was neceſſary. 2. That it will be honourable and profitable. And, 3. That in all probability it will be no injury, but a real advantage to the iſland of Great Britain.

1. It had become abſolutely neceſſary. All reconciliation, but upon the footing of abſolute unconditional ſubmiſſion, had been poſitively refuſed by Great Britain; unleſs, therefore, the colonies had reſolved to continue in a looſe and broken ſtate, with

the name of a government which they had taken arms to oppoſe, the ſtep which they have now taken could not have been avoided. Beſides, things had proceeded ſo far, and ſuch meaſures had been taken on both ſides, that it had become impoſſible to lay down a ſcheme by which *they* ſhould be ſure of our dependence, and *we*, at the ſame time, ſecured in our liberties. While things continued in their ancient ſtate, there was perhaps a power on the part of each, of which they were hardly conſcious, or were afraid and unwilling to exert. But after the encroachments had been made and reſiſted, to expect any thing elſe than a continual attempt to extend authority on the one hand, and to guard againſt it on the other, is to diſcover very little knowledge of human nature. In ſuch a ſituation, though every claim of America ſhould be yielded, ſhe would ſoon be either in a ſtate of continual confuſion, or abſolute ſubmiſſion. The king of England, living in his Engliſh dominions, would not, and indeed durſt not aſſent to any act of an American legiſlature that was, or was ſuppoſed to be hurtful to his Engliſh ſubjects. This is not founded on conjecture, but experience. There is not (at leaſt Dean Swift affirms it) any dependence of Ireland upon England, except an act of the Iriſh Parliament, that the king of England ſhall be king of Ireland. This laſt has a ſeparate independent legiſlature, and in every thing elſe but the above circumſtance ſeems to be perfectly free; yet if any man ſhould aſſert that the one kingdom is not truly ſubject to the other, he would in my opinion know very little of the ſtate and hiſtory of either.

2. A ſtate of independency will be both honourable and profitable to this country. I paſs over many advantages in the way of commerce, as well as in other reſpects, that muſt neceſſarily accrue from it, that I may dwell a little on the great and leading benefit which is the foundation of all the reſt. We ſhall have the opportunity of forming plans of government upon the moſt rational, juſt, and equal principles. I confeſs I have always looked upon this with a kind of enthuſiaſtic ſatisfaction. The caſe never happened before ſince the world began. All the governments we have read of in former ages were ſettled by caprice or accident, by the influence of prevailing parties or particular perſons, or preſcribed by a conqueror. Important improvements indeed have been forced upon ſome conſtitutions by the ſpirit of daring men, ſupported by ſucceſsful inſurrections. But to ſee government in large and populous countries ſettled from its foundation by deliberate counſel, and directed immediately to the public good of the preſent and future generations, while the people are waiting for the deciſion with full confidence in the wiſdom and impartiality of thoſe to whom they have committed the important truſt, is certainly altogether new. We learn indeed from hiſtory, that ſmall tribes and feeble new ſettlements did ſometimes employ one man of eminent wiſdom to prepare a ſyſtem of laws for them. Even this was a wiſe meaſure, and attended with happy effects. But how vaſt the difference, when we have the experience of all paſt ages, the hiſtory of human ſociety, and the well known cauſes of

proſperity and miſery in other governments to aſſiſt us in the choice.

The proſpect of this happy circumſtance, and the poſſibility of loſing it, and ſuffering the ſeaſon to paſs over, has filled me with anxiety for ſome time. So far as we have hitherto proceeded, there has been great unanimity and public ſpirit. The inhabitants of every province, and perſons of all denominations, have vied with each other in zeal for the common intereſt. But was it not to be feared that ſome men would acquire over-bearing influence? that human weakneſs and human paſſions would diſcover themſelves, and prevent the finiſhing of what had been ſo happily begun? In the time of the civil wars in England, had they ſettled a regular form of government as ſoon as the Parliament had obtained an evident ſuperiority, their liberties would never have been ſhaken, and the Revolution would have been unneceſſary. But by delaying the thing too long, they were broken into parties, and bewildered in their views, and at laſt tamely ſubmitted without reſiſtance to that very tyranny againſt which they had fought with ſo much glory and ſucceſs. For this reaſon I think that every candid and liberal mind ought to rejoice in the meaſures lately taken through the States of America, and particularly the late declaration of independence; as it will not only give union and force to the meaſures of defence while they are neceſſary, but lay a foundation for the birth of millions, and the future improvement of a great part of the globe.

I have only further to obſerve, 3. That I am confident the independence of America will, in the end,

be to the real advantage of the iſland of Great Britain. Were this even otherwiſe, it would be a weak argument againſt the claim of juſtice. Why ſhould the ſecurity or proſperity of this vaſt country be ſacrificed to the ſuppoſed intereſt of an inconſiderable ſpot? But I cannot believe that the miſery and ſubjection of any country on earth is neceſſary to the happineſs of another. Blind partiality and ſelf-intereſt may repreſent it in this light, but the opinion is deluſive, the ſuppoſition is falſe. The ſucceſs and increaſe of one nation is, or may be a benefit to every other. It is ſeldom indeed that a people in general can receive and adopt theſe generous ſentiments, they are nevertheleſs perfectly juſt. It is induſtry only, and not poſſeſſions, that makes the ſtrength and wealth of a nation; and this is not hindered, but encouraged, provoked, and rewarded, by the induſtry of others *.

But to leave the general principle, or rather to apply it to the caſe of Great Britain and America—what profit has the former hitherto received from the latter? and what can it reaſonably expect for the future? Only its trade, and ſuch part of that trade as tends to encourage the induſtry, and increaſe the number of the inhabitants of that iſland. It will be ſaid they intend to raiſe a large, clear, net revenue upon us, by taxation. It has been ſhewn by many, that all the taxes which they could raiſe would only ſerve to feed the inſatiable deſire of wealth in placemen and penſioners, to increaſe the influence of the crown, and the corruption of the people. It was by the acquiſition of numerous pro-

* See David Hume's Eſſay on the Jealouſy of Trade.

vinces that Rome haſtened to its ruin. But even ſuppoſing it otherwiſe, and that without any bad conſequence among themſelves, they were to acquire a great addition to their yearly revenue, for every ſhilling they gained by taxes, they would loſe ten in the way of trade. For a trifling addition to the ſums of public money to be applied or waſted by miniſters of ſtate, they would loſe ten times the quantity diſtributed among uſeful manufacturers, the ſtrength and glory of a ſtate. I think this has been ſometimes compared to the difference between draughts of ſpirituous liquors to intoxicate the head or weaken the ſtomach, and cool refreſhing food to give ſoundneſs, health and vigour, to every member of the body.

The trade, then, of America, as ſoon as peace is ſettled, will be as open to them as ever. But it will be ſaid they have now an excluſive trade, they will then but ſhare it with other nations. I anſwer, an excluſive trade is not eaſily preſerved, and when it is preſerved, the reſtriction is commonly more hurtful than uſeful. Trade is of a nice and delicate nature; it is founded upon intereſt. It will force its way wherever intereſt leads, and can hardly by any art be made to go in another direction. The Spaniards have an excluſive trade, as far as they pleaſe to confine it, to their own plantations. Do they reap much benefit from it? I believe not. Has it made their own people more induſtrious at home? Juſt the contrary. Does it not, in the natural courſe of things, make a people leſs careful to work as well and as cheap as others, to procure voluntary pur-

chaſers, when they know they can ſend their goods to thoſe who are obliged to take them? Does it not both tempt and enable great merchants in the capital, to import from other nations what they can export to ſuch a forced market to advantage? By this means a conſiderable profit may come into the coffers of a few particulars, while no eſſential ſervice is done to the people, and the ultimate profit is carried to that country where the goods are produced or fabricated. It has been repeatedly ſaid by political writers in England, that the balance of trade is againſt that country to every nation, excepting Portugal and their own plantations. I will not anſwer for the truth or univerſality of this aſſertion, but if it is true in any meaſure, I will venture to affirm, upon the principles of general reaſon, that the cauſe which produces it is no other than the excluſive trade they have hitherto enjoyed to the American ſettlements.

But the circumſtance which I apprehend will contribute moſt to the intereſt of Great Britain in American independence, is its influence in peopling and enriching this great continent. It will certainly tend to make the American States numerous, powerful and opulent, to a degree not eaſily conceived. The great and penetrating Monteſquieu, in his Spirit of Laws, has ſhewn in the cleareſt manner, that nothing contributes ſo much to the proſperity of a people, as the ſtate of ſociety among them, and the form of their government. A free government overcomes every obſtacle, makes a deſert a fruitful field, and fills a bleak and barren country with all the conveniencies of life. If ſo, what muſt be the

operation of this powerful cauſe upon countries enjoying in the higheſt degree every advantage that can be derived from ſituation, climate, and ſoil? If the trade of America has hitherto been of ſo great benefit to England, how much more valuable may it be when theſe countries ſhall be ſtill more highly improved, if ſhe ſhall continue to enjoy it! This argument is liable to no objection but what may ariſe from the loſs of an excluſive trade, which I have already conſidered. It may be added, however, that there is not now, nor ever has been any averſion in the Americans to the people of Great Britain, ſo that they may be ſure of our trade if they treat us as well as others, and if otherwiſe, they do not deſerve it.

I might illuſtrate the argument by ſtating the probable conſequences of a contrary ſuppoſition. If Great Britain ſhould prevail, or overcome the American States, and eſtabliſh viceroys with abſolute authority in every province, all men of ſpirit and lovers of freedom would certainly withdraw themſelves to a corner, if ſuch could be found, out of the reach of tyranny and oppreſſion. The numbers of the people at any rate would ſenſibly decreaſe, their wealth would be ſpeedily exhauſted, and there would remain only a nominal authority over a deſolate country, in return for a vaſt expence laid out in the conqueſt, and in place of a great and profitable trade by which both nations were made happy. One of the arguments, if they may be called ſo, made uſe of againſt this country, and on which an obligation to obedience has been founded, is taken from the expence they have been at in blood and treaſure for

our protection in former wars. This argument has been often anſwered in the fulleſt manner; but if they ſhall continue to urge it, how fearful to think of the obligations we ſhall be under after this war is finiſhed! Then ſhall we owe them all the ſums which they ſhall have laid out in ſubduing us, and all that we have ſpent in attempting to prevent it; all the blood which they ſhall have ſhed in attacking us, and all that we ſhall have ſpilt in our own defence. There is unqueſtionably a loſs to Great Britain by the one ſide of the account as well as the other; and it tends to ſhew, in the cleareſt manner, the unſpeakable folly, as well as great injuſtice of the promoters of this war.

Thus I have ſtated to you, though very briefly, the principles on which I think the American cauſe ought to be pleaded, and on which it ought to be eſpouſed and ſupported by every lover of juſtice and of mankind. But though the general plea in juſtice were leſs clear than it is, there is a light in which the conduct of the oppoſers of it has always appeared to me unreaſonable and ungenerous to the higheſt degree. That reſiſtance to Great Britain has been determined on, in the moſt reſolute manner, through all the colonies, by a vaſt majority, is not only certain but undeniable. In the beginning of the controverſy, ſome writers, with an impudence hardly to be paralleled, called the fact in queſtion, attempted to deceive the people in this country, and effectually deceived the people of England, by making them believe that it was only a few factious

and violent men that had engaged in the conteſt. It is not very long ſince a writer had the courage to aſſert, that "nine-tenths of the people of Pennſylvania were againſt independence." The falſehood of ſuch miſrepreſentations is now manifeſt, and indeed was probably known from the beginning by thoſe who deſired to have them believed. Taking this for granted, then, for an inconſiderable minority, whether natives or ſtrangers, to ſet themſelves in oppoſition to the public councils, is contrary to reaſon and juſtice, and even to the very firſt principles of the ſocial life.

If there is any principle that was never controverted upon the ſocial union it is, that as a body every ſociety muſt be determined by the plurality. There was a time when it was not only juſt and conſiſtent, but neceſſary that every one ſhould ſpeak his mind freely and fully of the neceſſity or expediency of reſiſting the authority of Great Britain. But that time is over long ago. The meaſures being reſolved upon, and the conflict begun, one who is barely neuter can ſcarce be forgiven; a ſecret plodding enemy muſt be conſidered as a traitor. Every perſon who continued among us after the deciſive reſolutions formed by all the Colonies, ought to be conſidered as pledging his faith and honour to aſſiſt in the common cauſe. Let me try to illuſtrate it by a ſimilar caſe. Suppoſe that a ſhip at ſea ſprings a leak, which expoſes the whole company to the moſt imminent danger of periſhing. Suppoſe a council is called of all the perſons on board, to determine what port they ſhall endeavour to gain.

Then it is not only the right, but the duty of every one to ſpeak his own judgment, and to preſs it upon others by every argument in his power. Suppoſe a great majority determines to puſh for a certain place, and to go to the pump by turns every quarter of an hour; but that two, or three, or one, if you pleaſe, is of opinion that they ſhould have gone another courſe, becauſe of the wind, current, or any other circumſtance, and that it would be beſt to change hands at the pump only every half hour. All this is well. But if, after the determination, this ſame gentleman, becauſe his advice was not followed, ſhould refuſe to pump at all, ſhould ſlily alter the ſhip's courſe, or deaden her way by every means in his power, or even ſhould only by continual complaints and deſponding fears diſcourage others, on whoſe activity the common ſafety depended, I deſire to know what treatment he would receive or deſerve? Without doubt he would be thrown overboard in leſs time than I have taken to ſtate the caſe. I am not able to perceive the leaſt difference between this ſuppoſition and what takes place in America at the preſent time.

If this argument is juſt with reſpect to every inhabitant of the country, it ought to have ſome additional weight with thoſe who are not natives, and whoſe reſidence is not certain or has not been long. There is a great degree of indecency in ſuch taking any part againſt what the majority of the inhabitants think to be their intereſt, and that of their country. Were they even wrong, their miſtake ſhould be lamented, not reſiſted; on the contrary, it

would be the part both of generoſity and juſtice to ſupport them effectually in a conteſt which wiſdom would have declined. We ſee indeed every day, melancholy inſtances of a baſe and ſelfiſh temper operating different ways. Many, when they do not obtain that rank and honour which their pride and partiality think their due, or if their advice is not followed, immediately renounce the ſervice of their country, and it may go to deſtruction for them. In oppoſition to this, let me recommend the example of the illuſtrious Fabius of Rome. He had given ſtrict orders to all his officers not to engage the enemy, but to keep at a diſtance. Unluckily his lieutenant-general, by his own raſhneſs, got entangled with a part of the army under his command, and was engaged. Fabius, preferring his country's good to fame, rivalſhip, and ſafety, came immediately to his ſupport with all expedition, and thereby gained a glorious and complete victory.

I hope you will take in good part the above reflections, which I think contain nothing that is virulent or indecent againſt any man or body of men. They are the effects of judgment and conviction. The author, as is probably known to many of you, has been perſonally abuſed in newſpapers at home, for the part he was ſuppoſed to have taken in the American cauſe, which was in ſome degree indeed the motive to this addreſs. He hopes that an honeſt and faithful ſupport of liberty and equal government in this part of the world, will be no juſt reproach to his character, either as a ſcholar, a miniſter, or a Chriſtian; and that it is perfectly conſiſtent

with an undiminiſhed regard for the country which gave him birth.

The above is ſubmitted to your candid peruſal by,

Gentlemen,

Your ſincere friend, and

Obedient humble ſervant,

The AUTHOR.

SERMON XXIII.

DELIVERED AT A PUBLIC THANKSGIVING AFTER PEACE.

PSAL. iii. 8.

Salvation belongeth unto the Lord.

MY BRETHREN,

WE are met together in obedience to public authority, to keep a day of ſolemn thankſgiving to God, for the goodneſs of his providence to the United States of America, in the courſe of a war, which has now laſted ſeven years, with a powerful and formidable nation. We are particularly called upon to give thanks for the ſignal ſucceſſes with which it hath pleaſed him to bleſs our arms and thoſe of our allies, in the courſe of the laſt year, and the campaign which is now drawing to a cloſe. I need ſay nothing of the importance of the great conteſt in which we have been ſo long engaged, or the

intereſting alternative which depends upon the iſſue, as theſe ſeem to have been felt in the fulleſt manner by all ranks in this country, from the beginning. The language even of the common people will convince every man of reflection that they are univerſally ſenſible how much is at ſtake. My proper buſineſs, therefore, is to engage every pious hearer to adore the providence of God in general, to offer with ſincerity and gratitude the ſacrifice of praiſe for his many mercies, and to make a wiſe and juſt improvement of the preſent promiſing ſituation of public affairs.

Many who now hear me are witneſſes, that it has never been my practice, for reaſons which appear to me to be good, to intermix politics with the ordinary ſervice of the ſanctuary, on the weekly returns of the Chriſtian Sabbath, further than fervent ſupplications to the throne of grace, for divine direction to the public counſels, and aſſiſtance to thoſe who are employed in the public ſervice. But on days of this kind it becomes part of a miniſter's duty to direct the attention of the hearers to events of a public nature. This you know I did with great concern, and at conſiderable length, ſix years ago on a public faſt day. I would therefore willingly, in this more advanced period, take a view of what is paſt, and endeavour to direct you in what remains, of your duty to God, to your country, and to yourſelves.

For this purpoſe I have choſen the words of the Pſalmiſt David now read, which are part of a pſalm generally thought to have been compoſed by the

royal author before the war with Abſalom, his unnatural ſon, was wholly finiſhed; but when he had ſuch preſages of ſucceſs as made him ſpeak the language of faith and confidence. "I laid me down and ſlept: I awaked, for the Lord ſuſtained me. I will not be afraid of ten thouſands of people that have ſet themſelves againſt me round about. Ariſe, O Lord, ſave me, O my God; for thou haſt ſmitten all mine enemies upon the cheek-bone; thou haſt broken the teeth of the ungodly. Salvation belongeth unto the Lord; thy bleſſing is upon thy people. Selah."

In diſcourſing upon this ſubject I propoſe, through the aſſiſtance of divine grace,

I. To explain and ſtate the proper meaning of this expreſſion or ſentiment of the inſpired Pſalmiſt, "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord."

II. To lay before you a ſuccinct view of what the United States of America owe to divine Providence in the courſe of the preſent war.

III. To make a practical improvement of the ſubject for your inſtruction and direction.

Firſt, then, I am to explain and ſtate the proper meaning of this expreſſion or ſentiment of the inſpired Pſalmiſt, "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord." This I mean to do by adhering ſtrictly to what appears to be the mind of the Spirit of God in the paſſage before us, as well as in a manner agreeable to the analogy of faith. As religion is the ſame in ſubſtance in every age, the reflections of pious perſons on the courſe of Providence, ariſe from

the ſame examples, and lead to the ſame end. The words may juſtly be ſuppoſed to contain the Pſalmiſt's thankful acknowledgment of the paſt mercies of God, as well as the foundation of his future ſecurity. They carry in them a general confeſſion of the influence of divine Providence upon every event, and in particular with reſpect to ſalvation, or deliverance from impending danger. In this view when he ſays, "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord," it ſeems to imply the three following things.

1. That "ſalvation belongeth unto the Lord," as diſtinguiſhed from human or created help, and therefore all confidence in man ſtands oppoſed to the ſentiment expreſſed by the holy Pſalmiſt in the text. It is not oppoſed to the uſe or application of, but to an exceſſive or undue reliance on human means, or ſecond cauſes of any kind. It implies, that ſucceſs in any attempt is to be ultimately attributed to God. That it is he who by his providence provides outward means, who raiſes up friends to his people, or cauſes "their enemies to be at peace with them." That it is he who in caſes of difficulty and danger directs their hands to war and their fingers to fight, and finally crowns their endeavours with ſucceſs. Whether therefore the outward advantages are great or ſmall, whether the expectation or the probability of ſucceſs has been ſtrong or weak, he who confeſſes that ſalvation belongeth unto God, will finally give the glory to him. Confidence before, and boaſting after the event, are alike contrary to this diſpoſition. If any perſon deſires to have his faith in this truth confirmed or improved, let him read the hiſtory of

mankind in a cool and conſiderate manner, and with a ſerious frame of ſpirit. He will then perceive that every page will add to his conviction. He will find that the moſt important events have ſeemed to turn upon circumſtances the moſt trivial, and the moſt out of the reach of human direction. A blaſt of wind, a ſhower of rain, a random ſhot, a private quarrel, the neglect of a ſervant, a motion without intention, or a word ſpoken by accident and miſunderſtood, has been the cauſe of a victory or defeat which has decided the fate of empires. Whoever, with theſe facts in his view, believes the conſtant influence and over-ruling power of divine providence, will know what the Pſalmiſt means when he ſays, "Salvation belongeth unto the Lord."

2. In this ſentiment the Pſalmiſt ſeems to have had in view the *omnipotence* of Providence; that nothing is impoſſible with God; that there is no ſtate ſo dangerous, no enemy ſo formidable, but he is able to work deliverance. He has not only the direction and government of means and ſecond cauſes, but is himſelf ſuperior to all means. The word *ſalvation*, when it is applied in Scripture to temporal danger, generally ſignifies a great and diſtinguiſhed deliverance. Thus it is uſed by Moſes, Exodus xiv. 13. "Stand ſtill and ſee the ſalvation of God;" and in the ſame manner, 1 Sam. xiv. 45. "Shall Jonathan die, who hath wrought this great ſalvation in Iſrael?" When, therefore, a perſon or people are threatened with evils of the moſt dreadful kind; when they are engaged in a conflict very unequal; when they are driven to extremity, and have no re-

ſource left as means of defence; theu, if the cauſe in which they are engaged is righteous and juſt, they may cry to God for relief. The ſentiment expreſſed by the Pſalmiſt ought to bear them up againſt deſpair, and they may ſay as the angel to the father of the faithful, "Is there any thing too hard for the Lord?" There are many inſtances in Scripture of ſignal deliverance granted to the ſervants of God, ſome of them even wholly miraculous, which teach us to ſet our hope in hi mercy, and not to ſuffer his mighty works to ſlip out of our minds. This is the exerciſe of faith in an unchangeable God—"the ſame yeſterday, to-day, and for ever."

3. This ſentiment has reſpect to the mercy and goodneſs of God, or his readineſs to hear the cry of the oppreſſed, and ſend deliverance to his people. This circumſtance is neceſſary to be taken in, to make him the proper object of faith and truſt; and it muſt be combined with the other, to give us a complete view of the influence of Providence. Power and wiſdom alone give an imperfect diſplay of the divine character. It would give little ſupport under the preſſure of affliction, to have a general or theoretical perſuaſion that all things are poſſible with God; but if we believe his readineſs to interpoſe, and ſee our title clear to implore his help, we have that hope which is juſtly called "the anchor of the ſoul, ſure and ſtedfaſt." In this ſenſe ſalvation belongeth unto God; it is his prerogative, it is his glory. The promiſe ſo often repeated in the ſame or ſimilar terms, is addreſſed both to nations and particular perſons. "He ſhall call upon

me, and I will anſwer him. I will be with him in trouble, to deliver him, and to honour him. The righteous cry, and the Lord heareth, and delivereth him out of all his troubles. Many are the afflictions of the righteous; but the Lord delivereth him out of them all."

Having briefly ſtated theſe known and general truths, I proceed to the *ſecond* and principal thing propoſed, which was to lay before you a ſuccinct view of what the United States of America owe to divine providence, in the courſe of the preſent war. On conſidering this part of the ſubject, a difficulty preſents itſelf as to the manner of handling it. I am deſirous of doing it ſome meaſure of juſtice, and at the ſame time of avoiding exceſſive prolixity, or a tedious enumeration of particular facts. To unite theſe two purpoſes as much as poſſible, I will divide what I have to ſay into diſtinct branches; and after a few words of illuſtration on each of them, leave it to every hearer to add ſuch further examples as may have fallen within his own obſervation. The branches I would ſeparately conſider are the following: 1. Signal ſucceſſes, or particular and providential favours to us in the courſe of the war. 2. Preſervation from difficulties and evils which ſeemed to be in our ſituation unavoidable, and, at the ſame time, next to inſurmountable. 3. Confounding the counſels of our enemies, and making them haſten on the change which they deſired to prevent.

1. Signal ſucceſſes, or providential favours to us

in the courſe of the war. Here I muſt mention what happened at the beginning of the conteſt, and prevented us from being cruſhed in the very out-ſet, although it is now in a manner wholly forgotten. Let us remember our true ſituation, after we had made the moſt public and peremptory declarations of our determination to defend our liberties. There was a willing ſpirit, but unarmed hands. Our enemies have all along charged us with a deliberate concerted purpoſe of breaking with them, and ſetting up an independent empire. The falſehood of this accuſation might be made to appear from many circumſtances; as there being no pre-contract among the ſtates themſelves, nor any attempt to engage allies or aſſiſtance in Europe, and ſeveral others. But though there were no other argument at all, it is ſufficiently proved by the total want of arms and ammunition to ſupply us even during the firſt ſtages of reſiſtance. The nakedneſs of the country in this reſpect is well known; and our enemies endeavoured to avail themſelves of it, by taking every meaſure to prevent their being brought to us. This difficulty was got over by many providential ſupplies, without the care or foreſight of thoſe who were at the head of affairs, and particularly by many unexpected captures from our enemies themſelves.

How contrary to human appearance and human conjectures have many circumſtances turned out! It was univerſally ſuppoſed at firſt, that we ſhould be able to do nothing at all at ſea, becauſe of the great naval power of the enemy, yet the ſucceſs of

our private veſſels has been one of the moſt powerful means of diſtreſſing them, and ſupporting us. I cannot help in particular taking notice, that the eaſtern ſtates, which were the firſt objects of their vengeance, were actually in their poſſeſſion, and ſeemed to be devoted to pillage and deſtruction; yet in a ſhort time they were delivered, and have in the courſe of the war acquired a greater acceſſion of wealth and power, than it is probable they could have done in the ſame period of ſecurity and peace.

It falls to be taken notice of under this branch of the ſubject, that our moſt ſignal ſucceſſes have generally been when we had the weakeſt hopes or the greateſt fears. What could be more diſcouraging than our ſituation at the cloſe of the year 1776; when, after General Howe's arrival with ſo powerful and well appointed an armament, our army, enliſted but for a few months, was almoſt entirely diſperſed? Yet then did the ſurpriſe of the Heſſians at Trenton, and the ſubſequent victory at Princeton, raiſe the drooping ſpirits of the country, and give a new turn to our affairs. Theſe advantages redounded greatly to the honour of the commander in chief who planned, and the handful of troops with him who executed the meaſures, as is confeſſed by all; yet were they of ſtill greater moment to the cauſe of America in general, than they were brilliant as military exploits. This place and neighbourhood having been the ſcene of theſe actions, cannot but make them and their conſequences freſh in the memory of every one who now hears me.

The great victory over General Burgoyne and his

army, (weakened at Bennington, and taken priſoners at Saratoga) which opened the eyes of Europe in general, and in ſome degree even of Britain, happened at a time when many were diſcouraged. It happened when after the loſſes of Brandy-Wine and Germantown, the Britiſh were in poſſeſſion of Philadelphia, and the Congreſs of the United States were obliged to fly to a diſtant part of the country. It happened not long after our diſgraceful flight from Ticonderoga, and the ſcandalous loſs of that poſt, which was every where ſaid and thought to be the key of the continent, and the poſſeſſion of it eſſential to our ſecurity. We muſt not omit to obſerve, that this victory over a numerous army of Britiſh regulars, was obtained by an army compoſed in a great meaſure of militia ſuddenly collected, and freemen of the country who turned out as volunteers.

In the ſame manner our late aſtoniſhing ſucceſs in the ſouth began when our affairs in that part of the continent wore a moſt diſcouraging aſpect. The year 1781, which began with mutiny in the northern army, and weakneſs in the ſouthern, produced more inſtances of gallantry and military proweſs than all the former, and was cloſed with a victory more glorious to us, and more humiliating to the enemy, than any thing that had before happened during the courſe of the war.

It was ſurely a great favour of Providence to raiſe up for us ſo great and illuſtrious an ally in Europe. This prince has aſſiſted us, as you all know, in a very powerful and effectual manner, and has grant-

ed that aſſiſtance upon a footing ſo generous as well as juſt, that our enemies will not yet believe, but there muſt be ſome ſecret and partial ſtipulations in favour of himſelf and his ſubjects, although no ſuch thing exiſts.

Let me add to all theſe, the providing for us a perſon who was ſo eminently qualified for the arduous taſk of commander in chief of the armies of the United States. I muſt make ſome apology here. None who know me, I think, will charge me with a diſpoſition to adulation or groſs flattery of living characters. I am of opinion, and have often expreſſed it, that the time for fixing a man's character is after death has ſet his ſeal upon it, and favour, fear and friendſhip are at an end. For this reaſon I do not mean to give a general or full character of the perſon here in view. But in ſpeaking of the kindneſs of Providence to the United States, it would be a culpable neglect not to mention that ſeveral of his characteriſtic qualities ſeem ſo perfectly ſuited to our wants, that we muſt conſider his appointment to the ſervice, and the continued health with which he has been bleſſed, as a favour from the God of heaven. Conſider his coolneſs and prudence, his fortitude and perſeverance, his happy talent of engaging the affections of all ranks, ſo that he is equally acceptable to the citizen and to the ſoldier—to the ſtate in which he was born, and to every other on the continent. To be a brave man, or ſkilful commander, is common to him with many others; but this country ſtood in need of a comprehenſive and penetrating mind, which underſtood the effect of

particular meaſures in bringing the general cauſe to an iſſue. When we contraſt his character and conduct with thoſe of the various leaders that have been oppoſed to him; when we conſider their attempts to blaſt each other's reputation, and the ſhort duration of their command, we muſt ſay that Providence has fitted him for the charge, and called him to the ſervice.

This head can hardly be better cloſed, than with the extraordinary interpoſition of divine Providence for the diſcovery of the black treachery of Arnold, who intended to put one of the moſt important fortreſſes, and the general himſelf, into the enemies hands. This deſign was ripe for execution, and the time of execution was at hand. As there was no ſuſpicion of the traitor, no meaſures were, or could be taken for preventing it. The meeting of the ſpy with two friends of America, which was entirely caſual, the unaccountable embarraſſment of that artful perſon, when with a little addreſs he might eaſily have extricated himſelf, and indeed the whole circumſtances of that affair, clearly point out the finger of God.

I might have added many more inſtances of the favour of Providence in particular events, but what have been mentioned, I think, are fully ſufficient for the purpoſe for which they are adduced, and will lead the hearers to the recollection of others of a ſimilar kind.

The ſecond part of my obſervations muſt be on the difficulties and dangers which ſeemed to be in our ſituation unavoidable, and, at the ſame time,

next to inſurmountable. The firſt of this kind which I ſhall mention is diſſenſion, or the oppoſition of one colony to another. On this our enemies reckoned very much, from the beginning. Even before the war broke out, reaſoners ſeemed to build their hopes of the colonies not breaking off from the mother country for ages, upon the impoſſibility of their uniting their ſtrength, and forming one compact body, either for offence or reſiſtance. To ſay the truth, the danger was great and real. It was on this account foreſeen and dreaded, and all true patriots were anxious to guard againſt it. Great thanks, doubtleſs, are due to many citizens in every ſtate, for their virtuous efforts to promote the general union. Theſe efforts have not been without effect; but I am of opinion, that union has been hitherto preſerved and promoted to a degree that no man ventured to predict, and very few had the courage to hope for. I confeſs myſelf, from the beginning, to have apprehended more danger from this than from any other quarter, and muſt now declare that my fears have been wholly diſappointed, and my hopes have been greatly exceeded. In the public councils no mark of diſſenſion, in matters of importance, has ever appeared; and I take upon me further to ſay, that every year has obliterated colonial diſtinctions, and worn away local prejudices, ſo that mutual affection is at preſent more cordial, and the views and works of the whole more uniform, than ever they were at any preceding period.

Having mentioned the union and harmony of the

United States, it will be very proper to add, that the harmony that has prevailed in the allied army is another ſignal mercy, for which we ought to be thankful to God. It is exceedingly common for diſſenſion to take place between troops of different nations, when acting together. In the Engliſh hiſtory we meet with few examples of conjunct expeditions, with ſea and land forces, in which the harmony has been complete. Our enemies did not fail to make uſe of every topic, which they apprehended would be inflammatory and popular, to produce jealouſies between us and our allies. Yet it has been wholly in vain. Not only have the officers and ſoldiers of the American and French armies acted together with perfect cordiality, but the troops of our allies have met with a hearty welcome wherever they have been, from the people of the country; and, indeed, juſt ſuch a reception as ſhews they were eſteemed to be of the utmoſt importance and utility to the American cauſe.

Another difficulty we had to encounter was the want of money and reſources for carrying on the war. To remedy this evil an expedient was fallen upon which I do not look upon myſelf as obliged either to juſtify or approve. It was, however, embraced by the plurality as neceſſary, and, upon the whole, leſs hazardous than any other which in our ſituation was practicable. The difficulty of raiſing, clothing, paying and ſupporting an army, with a depreciated currency, which its own nature, the arts of intereſted perſons, and the unwearied attempts of our enemies were puſhing on to annihilation, may be eaſily perceived. Yet the war has not only

been ſupported, but we have ſeen the fall and ruin of the money itſelf, without the leaſt injury to the public cauſe. Without injury, did I ſay? it was to the unſpeakable benefit of the public cauſe. Many private perſons, indeed, have ſuffered ſuch injury as not only merits pity, but calls for redreſs, and I hope the time will come, when all the redreſs ſhall be given that the nature of the thing and the ſtate of the country will admit. In the mean time, when we reflect upon what is paſt, we have a proof of the general attachment of the country to the cauſe of liberty, the ſtrongeſt perhaps that can well be conceived, and we ſee a circumſtance from which we feared the greateſt evil, adding its force to many others, in blinding our enemies, miſleading their meaſures, and diſappointing their expectations.

Another difficulty we had before us was the being obliged to encounter the whole force of the Britiſh nation, with an army compoſed of raw ſoldiers, unacquainted with military diſcipline. The difficulty was increaſed by our own conduct, viz. filling our army with ſoldiers enliſted for ſhort periods. The views of thoſe who preferred this method were certainly very honourable, though the wiſdom of it is at leaſt very diſputable. They hoped it would make every man in America a ſoldier in a ſhort time. This effect, indeed, it has in a good degree produced, by the frequent calls of the militia wherever the enemy appeared. They alſo apprehended danger from a ſtanding army, unconnected with civil life, who, after they had conquered their enemies, might give cauſe of jealouſy to

their friends. The hiſtory of other countries in general, and in particular that of the civil wars in England againſt Charles the Firſt, ſeemed to give plauſibility to this reaſon, though from ſeveral circumſtances there was leſs cauſe of fear in America, than would have been in one of the European ſtates. However, the meaſure was reſolved upon by the plurality at firſt, and we felt the inconvenience of it very ſeverely; but it pleaſed God to preſerve us from utter deſtruction, to ſet bounds to the progreſs of our enemies, and to give time to the ſtates to make better and more effectual proviſion for their final overthrow.

The only other danger I ſhall mention was that of anarchy and confuſion, when government under the old form was at an end, and every ſtate was obliged to eſtabliſh civil conſtitutions for preſerving internal order, at the very ſame time that they had to reſiſt the efforts of a powerful enemy from without. This danger appeared ſo conſiderable, that ſome of the king of Great Britain's governors ran off early, as they themſelves profeſſed, in order to augment it. They hoped that univerſal diſorder would prevail in every colony, and not only defeat the meaſures of the friends of liberty, but be ſo inſupportable to the people in general, as to oblige them to return to their ſubjection, for their own ſakes, and to be rid of a ſtill greater evil. This danger, through the divine bleſſing, we happily, and indeed entirely eſcaped. The governors by their flight ripened every meaſure, and haſtened on the change by rendering it viſibly neceſſary. Provincial

conventions were held, city and county committees were every where choſen, and ſuch was the zeal for liberty, that the judgment of theſe committees was as perfectly ſubmitted to, and their orders more cheerfully and completely executed, than thoſe of any regular magiſtrates, either under the old government or ſince the change. At the ſame time every ſtate prepared and ſettled their civil conſtitutions, which have now all taken place, and, except in very few inſtances, without the leaſt diſcord or diſſatisfaction. Happily for us in this ſtate, our conſtitution has now ſubſiſted near ſeven years, and we have not ſo much as heard the voice of diſcontent. I ſpeak on this head of what is known to every hearer, and indeed to the whole world; and yet I am perſuaded, that to thoſe who reflect upon it, it will appear next to miraculous. Although ſo much was to be done in which every man was intereſted, although the colonies were ſo various and extenſive, and the Parliament of Great Britain was threatening, and its army executing vengeance againſt us, yet the whole was completed in little more than a year, with as much quietneſs and compoſure as a private perſon would move his family and furniture from one houſe, and ſettle them in another.

The third branch of my obſervations ſhall conſiſt of a few inſtances in which the counſels of our enemies have been confounded, and their meaſures have been ſuch as to haſten on the change which they deſired to prevent. As to the firſt of theſe, nothing can be more remarkable than the ignorance and error in which they have continued from the firſt

riſe of the controverſy to the preſent time, as to the ſtate of things, and the diſpoſitions of men in America. Even thoſe at the head of affairs in Great Britain, have not only conſtantly given out, but in my opinion have ſincerely believed, that the great body of the people were upon their ſide, and were only miſled into rebellion by a few factious leaders. At the ſame time, the very ſame perſons, without being ſenſible of the abſurdity, have affirmed that this country was groaning under the oppreſſion of its rulers, and longed to be delivered from it. Now theſe things could not both be true. If the firſt had been true, theſe leaders muſt have been popular and acceptable in a high degree, and have had the moſt extenſive influence. If the laſt had been true, they muſt have been inwardly and univerſally deteſted. But how many circumſtances might have convinced them of the falſehood of both theſe aſſertions? The vaſt extent of the ſtates, and the concurrence of all ranks and claſſes of men, which was ſo early, ſo uniform, and ſo notorious, plainly prove that no ſuch thing could have happened, without a ſtrong and rooted inclination in the people themſelves, and ſuch as no addreſs or management of intereſted perſons could have produced. Beſides, thoſe who know how fluctuating a body the Congreſs is, and what continual changes take place in it, as to men, muſt perceive the abſurdity of their making or ſucceeding in any ſuch attempt. The truth is, the American Congreſs owes its exiſtence and its influence to the people at large. I might eaſily ſhew, that there has hardly any great or important ſtep

been taken, but the public opinion has gone before the reſolutions of that body; and I wiſh I could not ſay, that they have been ſometimes very ſlow in hearing and obeying it.

As to the other aſſertion, it was ſtill more manifeſtly falſe, and they had greater opportunities of perceiving it to be ſo. If Congreſs, or thoſe in public truſt in any ſtate, had tyrannized over the people, or wantonly oppreſſed them, the uſurpation would, in the nature of things, have come to a ſpeedy period. But what if I ſhould ſay, that this pretence of our enemies, in an equivocal ſenſe, is indeed true; and yet this truth doth but the more clearly demonſtrate their error and deluſion. It is true that Congreſs has, in many inſtances, been obliged to have recourſe to meaſures in themſelves hard and oppreſſive, and confeſſed to be ſo, which yet have been patiently ſubmitted to, becauſe of the important purpoſe that was to be ſerved by them. Of this kind was the emiſſion of paper money, the paſſing of tender laws, compelling all into the militia, draughting the militia to fill the regular army, preſſing proviſions and carriages, and many others of the like nature. Two things are remarkable in this whole matter: one, that every impoſition for the public ſervice fell heavieſt upon thoſe who were the friends of America; the lukewarm or contrary minded always finding ſome way of ſhifting the load from their own ſhoulders; the other, that from the freedom of the preſs in this country, there never were wanting the boldeſt and moſt inflammatory publications, both againſt men and meaſures. Yet

neither the one nor the other, nor both united, had any perceptible influence in weakening the attachment of the people. If this account is juſt, and I am confident it is known to be ſo by almoſt all who now hear me, what leſs than judicial blindneſs could have made our enemies ſo obſtinate in the contrary ſentiments? Such, however, we know has been the caſe, and as the whole of their proceedings have been grounded on miſtakes, it is no wonder that they have been both injudicious and unſucceſsful.

This matter may be explained in the following manner. They ſuppoſed that they had only a few diſcontented particulars to apprehend and puniſh, and an army to conquer in no reſpects comparable to their own; but in addition to this they had the loſt affections of a whole people to recover. The firſt, which was almoſt of no conſequence at all, they bent their whole force to effect, in council and in the field. The other they ſuppoſed was already done, or not worth the doing; and therefore every meaſure they took had a quite different intention, and a quite oppoſite effect. In all this they were fortified and confirmed by the ſentiments, diſcourſe, and conduct of the diſaffected in America. Theſe unhappy people, from the joint influence of prejudice, reſentment and intereſt, were unwearied in their endeavours to miſlead their friends. Their prejudice deſerves to be mentioned firſt. This was great indeed. They had generally ſuch an exalted idea of the power of Britain, that they really conſidered it as madneſs to reſiſt. I could mention many ſentiments uttered by them, which could hardly fail

of making the hearers to ſmile at their groſs ignorance, and more than childiſh timidity. Reſentment alſo joined its force. They were ſometimes roughly handled by the multitude at the beginning of the controverſy. This led them to wiſh for revenge, aud as they could not inflict it themſelves, to call for it from their friends in England. To theſe two circumſtances we may add, that the road to favour was plainly that of flattery; and therefore their opinions and intelligence were generally ſuch as they ſuppoſed would be moſt acceptable to thoſe who had it in their power to provide for them, or promote them. Such was the effect of theſe circumſtances united, that time will conſtrain every body to confeſs, that the partizans and friends of the Engliſh in America, have done more eſſential injury to their cauſe, than the greateſt and boldeſt of their enemies.

The above diſtinction between overcoming the armed force of the ſtates, and regaining the people's hearts, is the true key to explain the proceedings, and account for the events of the war. Every meaſure taken by Great Britain, from the beginning, inſtead of having the leaſt tendency to gain the affections of the people of this country, had, and one would think muſt have been ſeen to have the moſt powerful influence in producing the contrary effect. Without mentioning every ſeparate particular, I will only conſider a little the cruelty and ſeverity with which the war has been carried on; becauſe I am firmly of opinion, that the ſpirit and temper of our enemies in this conteſt, has been the principal

cauſe of the diſappointment of their attempts. In this the cabinet and counſellors in Great Britain, and the officers and ſoldiers of their armies in America, have nothing to reproach each other with. If the barbarity of the army has ever equalled, certainly it has never exceeded the cruelty of ſeveral of the acts of parliament. I will not enumerate theſe acts which are ſo well known, and which ſome years ago were ſo often mentioned in every publication; but ſhall only tell you with what view I deſire you to recollect them. Every one of theſe acts, on their being known in America, ſerved to increaſe the union of the ſtates, to fill the hearts of the citizens with reſentment, and to add vigour to the ſoldier's arm.

After the example of their employers at home, the commanders of the Britiſh armies, their officers and ſoldiers, and indeed all their adherents, ſeemed to have been animated with a ſpirit of implacable rancour, mingled with contempt, towards the Americans. This is to be underſtood of the general run or greateſt number of every claſs, always admitting that there were particular exceptions, whoſe honour and principle controuled or overcame the national prejudice. Neither perhaps is it in any of them to be aſcribed ſo much to the national character, as to the nature and ſubject of the quarrel. It has been long obſerved, that civil wars are carried on with much greater fury, and attended with acts of greater barbarity, than wars between independent nations. The fact, however, of their barbarity is certain; and no leſs ſo is the powerful influence which this con-

duct has had in defeating their expectations, either of reconciliation or ſubmiſſion.

The barbarous treatment of the American priſoners through the whole war, but eſpecially at the beginning, when their enemies were confident of ſucceſs, is a melancholy ſubject indeed, and will be a ſtain upon the Britiſh name to future ages. No part of America can be ignorant of this, having witneſſes in every ſtate, in the few that returned alive out of their hands. But we in this ſtate, through which they paſſed to their homes, can never forget the appearance of the emaciated ſpectres who eſcaped, or were exchanged from Britiſh dungeons or priſon-ſhips. Neither was it poſſible for the people in general not to be ſtruck with the contraſt when exchanges took place, and they ſaw companies of Britiſh priſoners going home hale and hearty, bearing every mark of their having been ſupplied with comfortable proviſions, and treated with humanity in every other reſpect. I am not to enlarge upon theſe known and fertile ſubjects. The only reaſon of their being introduced, is to ſhew the effect which ſpectacles of this kind muſt have had upon the public mind, and their influence in rendering the return of the people of this country to ſubmiſſion to the parent ſtate altogether impoſſible.

The inhuman treatment of the American priſoners by the Britiſh, was not more remarkable than their inſolence and rapacity towards the people of the country wherever their power extended. The abuſe and contempt poured upon the inhabitants in diſcourſe, and the indiſcriminate plunder of their pro-

perty, could not but in the moſt powerful manner alienate their affections. Many who hear me at preſent have had ſo full conviction of this truth in their own experience, that it is unneceſſary to offer any proof of it. It is of importance however to obſerve, that this impolitic oppreſſion was the true and proper cauſe of the general concourſe of the inhabitants of this State to the American ſtandard, in the beginning of the year 1777, and their vigorous exertions ever ſince againſt the incurſions of the enemy from New York. I confeſs I was not ſo much ſurpriſed at ſuch conduct when they poſſeſſed this part of the country, becauſe they were then fluſhed with victory, and had ſcarcely an idea that they would fail of final ſucceſs. But when we conſider that their conduct has been the ſame, or even worſe, in the ſouthern States, we can hardly help wondering at their infatuation. Surely there was time enough before the year 1780, to have convinced them that inſolence and cruelty were not the means of bringing back a revolted people; and yet by all accounts their treatment of the inhabitants in Georgia, South and North Carolina, in that year, was even more barbarous than had been experienced by the people here three years before.

I ſhall only further mention, that it ſeems plainly to have been not by accident, but in conſequence of general orders or a prevailing diſpoſition, that they treated, wherever they went, places of public worſhip (except thoſe of the Epiſcopal denomination) with all poſſible contempt and inſult. They were in general uſed, not only for hoſpitals, but ſtore-

houſes, barracks, riding ſchools and priſons, and in many places they were torn to pieces wantonly, and without any purpoſe to be ſerved by it, but wreaking their vengeance on the former poſſeſſors. What influence muſt this have had upon the minds of the people! What impreſſion muſt have been made upon the few who remained, and were witneſſes to theſe acts of profanation, when in thoſe places where they had been accuſtomed to hear nothing but the word and the worſhip of God, their ears were ſtunned with the horrid ſound of curſing and blaſphemy! This was done very early in Boſton, and repeated in every part of the continent with increaſing rage.

I have choſen on this part of the ſubject to inſiſt only on what was general, and therefore muſt be ſuppoſed to have had an extenſive influence. It would have been eaſy to have collected many particular acts of barbarity, but as theſe might be accounted for from the degeneracy and ſavage diſpoſition of the perſons who were ſeverally guilty of them, they would not have been ſo concluſive for the purpoſe for which they were adduced. I ſhall therefore omit every thing of this kind, except one of the earlieſt inſtances of their barbarity, becauſe it happened in one of the ſtreets of this place, viz. maſſacring in cold blood a miniſter of the goſpel, who was not, nor ever had been in arms, and received his death wound while on his knees begging mercy.

Upon the whole, nothing appears to me more manifeſt, than that the ſeparation of this country from

Britain has been of God; for every ſtep the Britiſh took to prevent, ſerved to accelerate it, which has generally been the caſe when men have undertaken to go in oppoſition to the courſe of Providence, and to make war with the nature of things.

I proceed to make ſome practical improvement of the ſubject, for your inſtruction and direction. And,

In the firſt place, it is our duty to give praiſe to God for the preſent happy and promiſing ſtate of public affairs. This is what we are called to, and making profeſſion of, by our meeting together at the preſent time. Let it then be more than a form. Let the diſpoſition of your hearts be correſpondent to the expreſſions of your lips. While we who are here alive before God this day, recollect with tenderneſs and ſympathy with ſurviving relations, the many valuable lives that have been loſt in the courſe of the war, let us give thanks to God who hath ſpared us as monuments of his mercy, who hath given us the ſatisfaction of ſeeing our complete deliverance approaching, and thoſe liberties, civil and religious, for which we have been contending, eſtabliſhed upon a laſting foundation. It will be remembered by many, that I have early and conſtantly expreſſed my diſapprobation of ſelf-confidence, and vain-glorious boaſting. To many American ſoldiers I have ſaid, Seldom boaſt of what you have done, but never of what you only mean to do. This was not occaſioned by any doubt or heſitation I ever had as to the probable iſſue of the war, from the appa-

rent ſtate of things, and the courſe of human events, but by a deep conviction of the ſinfulneſs of this practice, either in a nation or perſon. Now, therefore, that we have come ſo far in oppoſition to a formidable enemy, it is certainly our duty to ſay, that "ſalvation belongeth unto the Lord." This indeed is not only the duty of every perſon with reſpect to what is paſt, but is the way to ſupport and animate us in what remains of the warfare, and diſpoſe us to make a ſuitable improvement of the ſettlement which we hope is not very diſtant.

2. We ought to teſtify our gratitude to God for the many ſignal interpoſitions of his providence in our behalf, by living in his fear, and by a converſation ſuch as becometh the goſpel. This is not only a tribute we owe to him for every mercy, and therefore for thoſe of a public nature, but it is the only way by which public proſperity can become a real mercy to us. Eternity is of yet greater moment than any earthly bleſſing. Their ſtate is little to be envied, who are free as citizens, but ſlaves as ſinners. All temporal comforts derive their value from their being the fruits of divine goodneſs, the evidence of covenant love, and the earneſt of everlaſting mercy. It is therefore our indiſpenſable duty to endeavour to obtain the ſanctified improvement of every bleſſing, whether public or perſonal. There is the greater neceſſity of inſiſting on this at preſent, that though a time of national ſuffering or jeopardy has ſome advantages for alarming the conſciences of the ſecure, it hath alſo ſome diſadvantages, and frequently occaſions ſuch diſtraction of mind as is little

favourable to the practice of piety. We know by ſad experience, that the regular adminiſtration of divine ordinances, the obſervation of the Sabbath, and the good order of the country in general, have been much diſturbed by the war. The public ſervice ſeemed many times to juſtify what would otherwiſe have been highly improper. This contributed to introduce a licentiouſneſs of practice, and to protect thoſe from reſtraint or reproof, who I am afraid in many caſes rather yielded to inclination than ſubmitted to neceſſity. Now, therefore, when by the bleſſing of God our diſtreſſes are removed, we ought to return to punctuality as to public order, as well as conſcientious ſtrictneſs in every part of our practice.

3. In the third place, it is our duty to teſtify our gratitude to God, by uſefulneſs in our ſeveral ſtations; or in other words, by a concern for the glory of God, the public intereſt of religion, and the good of others. This is the duty of every perſon, even of the loweſt ſtation, at all times. Even the meaneſt and moſt unconnected hath ſtill ſome ſmall bounds within which his influence and example may be uſeful. But it is eſpecially the duty of thoſe who are diſtinguiſhed from others by their talents, by their ſtation, or by office and authority. I ſhall at preſent conſider it chiefly as the duty of two ſorts of perſons, miniſters and magiſtrates, thoſe who have the direction of religious ſocieties, and thoſe who are veſted with civil authority. As to the firſt of theſe, they are under the ſtrongeſt obligations to holineſs and uſefulneſs in their own lives, and dili-

gence in doing good to others. The world expects it from them, and demands it of them. Many of this claſs of men have been peculiarly the objects of the hatred and deteſtation of the enemy, in the courſe of this war. Such, therefore, as have been ſpared to ſee the return of peace and ſecurity, are bound by the ſtrongeſt ties to improve their time and talents in their Maſter's ſervice. But what I have peculiarly in view is, ſtrictneſs in religious diſcipline, or the inſpection of the morals of their ſeveral ſocieties. By our excellent conſtitution they are well ſecured in their religious liberty. The return which is expected from them to the community is, that by the influence of their religious government, their people may be the more regular citizens, and the more uſeful members of ſociety. I hope none here will deny, that the manners of the people in general are of the utmoſt moment to the ſtability of any civil ſociety. When the body of a people are altogether corrupt in their manners, the government is ripe for diſſolution. Good laws may hold the rotten bark ſome longer together, but in a little time all laws muſt give way to the tide of popular opinion, and be laid proſtrate under univerſal practice. Hence it clearly follows, that the teachers and rulers of every religious denomination are bound mutually to each other, and to the whole ſociety, to watch over the manners of their ſeveral members.

(2.) Thoſe who are veſted with civil authority ought alſo, with much care, to promote religion and good morals among all under their government. If we give credit to the holy Scriptures, he that

ruleth muſt be juſt, ruling in the fear of God. It is a truth of no little importance to us in our preſent ſituation, not only that the manners of a people are of conſequence to the ſtability of every civil ſociety, but that they are of much more conſequence to free ſtates, than to thoſe of a different kind. In many of theſe laſt, a principle of honour, and the ſubordination of ranks, with the vigour of deſpotic authority, ſupply the place of virtue, by reſtraining irregularities and producing public order. But in free ſtates, where the body of the people have the ſupreme power properly in their own hands, and muſt be ultimately reſorted to on all great matters, if there be a general corruption of manners, there can be nothing but confuſion. So true is this, that civil liberty cannot be long preſerved without virtue. A monarchy may ſubſiſt for ages, and be better or worſe under a good or bad prince; but a republic once equally poiſed, muſt either preſerve its virtue or loſe its liberty, and by ſome tumultuous revolution, either return to its firſt principles, or aſſume a more unhappy form.

From this reſults a double duty, that of the people themſelves, who have the appointment of rulers, and that of their repreſentatives, who are intruſted with the exerciſe of this delegated authority. Thoſe who wiſh well to the State, ought to chuſe to places of truſt, men of inward principle, juſtified by exemplary converſation. Is it reaſonable to expect wiſdom from the ignorant, fidelity from the profligate, aſſiduity and application to public buſineſs from men of a diſſipated life? Is it reaſonable to commit the

management of public revenue, to one who hath waſted his own patrimony? Thoſe, therefore, who pay no regard to religion and ſobriety in the perſons whom they ſend to the legiſlature of any ſtate, are guilty of the greateſt abſurdity, and will ſoon pay dear for their folly. Let a man's zeal, profeſſion, or even principles as to political meaſures, be what they will, if he is without perſonal integrity and private virtue as a man, he is not to be truſted. I think we have had ſome inſtances of men who have roared for liberty in taverns, and were moſt noiſy in public meetings, who yet have turned traitors in a little time. Suffer me on this ſubject to make another remark. I have not yet heard of any Chriſtian State in which there were not laws againſt immorality. But with what judgment will they be made, or with what vigour will they be executed, by thoſe who are profane and immoral in their own practice? Let me ſuppoſe a magiſtrate on the bench of juſtice adminiſtering an oath to a witneſs, or paſſing ſentence of death on a criminal, and putting him in mind of a judgment to come: With what propriety, dignity, or force, can any of theſe be done by one who is known to be a blaſphemer or an infidel, by whom in his convivial hours every thing that is ſerious and ſacred is treated with ſcorn?

But if the people in general ought to have regard to the moral character of thoſe whom they inveſt with authority, either in the legiſlative, executive, or judicial branches, ſuch as are ſo promoted may perceive what is, and will be expected from them. They are under the ſtrongeſt obligations to do their

utmoſt to promote religion, ſobriety, induſtry, and every ſocial virtue, among thoſe who are committed to their care. If you aſk me, what are the means which civil rulers are bound to uſe for attaining theſe ends, further than the impartial ſupport and faithful guardianſhip of the rights of conſcience? I anſwer that example itſelf is none of the leaſt. Thoſe who are in high ſtation and authority, are expoſed to continual obſervation, and therefore their example is both better ſeen, and hath greater influence than that of perſons of inferior rank. I hope it will be no offence in ſpeaking to a Chriſtian aſſembly, if I ſay that reverence for the name of God, a punctual attendance on the public and private duties of religion, as well as ſobriety and purity of converſation, are eſpecially incumbent on thoſe who are honoured with places of power and truſt.

But I cannot content myſelf with this. It is certainly the official duty of magiſtrates to be "a terror to evil doers, and a praiſe to them that do well." That ſociety will ſuffer greatly, in which there is no care taken to reſtrain open vice by exemplary puniſhment. It is often to be remarked, in ſome of the corrupt governments of Europe, that whatever ſtrictneſs may be uſed, or even impartiality in rendering juſtice between man and man, yet there is a total and abſolute relaxation as to what is chiefly and immediately a contempt of God. Perhaps a ſmall treſpaſs of a poor man on property, ſhall be purſued by a vindictive party, or puniſhed by a tyrannical judge with the utmoſt ſeverity, when all the laws againſt ſwearing, Sabbath breaking, lewd-

neſs, drunkenneſs and riot, ſhall be a dead letter, and more trampled upon by the judges themſelves, than by the people who are to be judged. Thoſe magiſtrates who would have their authority both reſpected and uſeful, ſhould begin at the ſource, and reform or reſtrain that impiety towards God, which is the true and proper cauſe of every diſorder among men. O the ſhort-ſightedneſs of human wiſdom, to hope to prevent the effect, and yet nouriſh the cauſe! Whence come diſhoneſty and petty thefts? I ſay, from idleneſs, Sabbath-breaking, and uninſtructed families. Whence come deceits of greater magnitude, and debts unpaid? from ſloth, luxury, and extravagance. Whence come violence, hatred, and ſtrife? from drunkenneſs, rioting, lewdneſs, and blaſphemy. It is common to ſay of a diſſolute liver, that he does harm to none but himſelf; than which I think there is not a greater falſehood that ever obtained credit in a deceived world. Drunkards, ſwearers, profane and laſcivious jeſters, and the whole tribe of thoſe who do harm to none but themſelves, are the peſts of ſociety, the corrupters of the youth, and, in my opinion, for the riſk of infection, thieves and robbers are leſs dangerous companions.

Upon the whole, my brethren, after we have contended in arms for liberty from foreign domination, let us guard againſt uſing our liberty as a cloke for licentiouſneſs, and thus poiſoning the bleſſing after we have attained it. Let us endeavour to bring into, and keep in credit and reputation, every thing that may ſerve to give vigour to an equal republican conſtitution. Let us cheriſh a love of piety, order,

induſtry, frugality. Let us check every diſpoſition to luxury, effeminacy, and the pleaſures of a diſſipated life. Let us in public meaſures put honour upon modeſty and ſelf-denial, which is the index of real merit. And in our families let us do the beſt by religious inſtruction, to ſow the ſeeds which may bear fruit in the next generation. We are one of the body of confederated States. For many reaſons I ſhall avoid making any compariſons at preſent, but may venture to predict, that whatſoever State among us ſhall continue to make piety and virtue the ſtandard of public honour, will enjoy the greateſt inward peace, the greateſt national happineſs, and in every outward conflict will diſcover the greateſt conſtitutional ſtrength.

SERMON XXIV.

CHRISTIAN MAGNANIMITY.

Preached at Princeton, September 1775, the Sabbath preceding the Annual Commencement of Princeton College; and again, with additions, September 23. 1787.

1 THESS. ii. 12.

That you would walk worthy of God, who hath called you into his kingdom and glory.

THE preſent ſtate was intended to be, and I think muſt, by every perſon of reflection, be admitted to be a continual trial of the faith and conſtancy of a Chriſtian. It is therefore a duty we owe to others in general, but in a ſpecial manner, the elder to the younger, to give them faithful

warning of the temptations and dangers to which they muſt of neceſſity be expoſed, if they mean to walk in the paths of piety and virtue. It hath often occurred to me, in meditating on this ſubject, that as falſe money is moſt dangerous when it is likeſt to the true, ſo thoſe principles, and that character which approach the neareſt to true religion, if, notwithſtanding, they are eſſentially different from it, will be moſt ready to impoſe on an uncautious and unſuſpecting mind. Therefore, if there is ſuch a thing as *a worldly virtue*, a ſyſtem of principles and duty, dictated by the ſpirit of the world, and the ſtandard of approbation or blame with the men of the world, and if this is at bottom eſſentially different from, and ſometimes directly oppoſed to the ſpirit of the goſpel, it muſt be of all others the moſt dangerous temptation, to perſons of a liberal education and an ingenious turn of mind.

This, if I am not miſtaken, is really the caſe. There are ſome branches of true religion which are univerſally approved, and which impiety itſelf cannot ſpeak againſt; ſuch as truth and integrity in ſpeech, honeſty in dealing, humanity and compaſſion to perſons in diſtreſs. But there are other particulars, in which the worldly virtue and the Chriſtian virtue ſeem to be different things. Of theſe I ſhall ſelect one as an example, viz. Spirit, dignity, or greatneſs of mind. This ſeems to be entirely of the worldly caſt; it holds a very high place in the eſteem of all worldly men; the boldeſt pretenſions are often made to it by thoſe who treat religion with neglect, and religious perſons with diſdain or defiance.

It is alſo a virtue of a very dazzling appearance, ready to captivate the mind, and particularly to make a deep impreſſion on young perſons, when they firſt enter into life. At the ſame time, the goſpel ſeems to ſtand directly oppoſed to it. The humility of the creature, the abaſement and contrition of the ſinner, the dependence and ſelf-denial of the believer, and, above all, the ſhame and reproach of the croſs itſelf, ſeem to conſpire in obliging us to renounce it.

What ſhall we ſay then, my brethren? Shall we ſay that magnanimity is no virtue at all, and that no ſuch excellence belongs to human nature? Or ſhall we admit that there is beauty and excellence in it—confeſſing at the ſame time, that it does not belong to religion, and only ſay, that though we want this, we have many other and better qualities in its place? To this I can never agree; for every real excellence is conſiſtent with every other; nay, every real excellence is adorned and illuſtrated by every other. Vices may be inconſiſtent with each other, but virtues never can. And, therefore, as magnanimity is an amiable and noble quality, one of the greateſt ornaments of our nature, ſo I affirm that it belongs only to true and undefiled religion, and that every appearance of the one, without the other, is not only defective but falſe.

The holy Scriptures, it is true, do chiefly inſiſt upon what is proper to humble our pride, and to bring us to a juſt apprehenſion of our character and ſtate. This was wiſe and juſt, becauſe of that corruption and miſery into which we are fallen; the

contrary would have been unjuſt. It is evidently more neceſſary, in the preſent ſtate of human nature, to reſtrain pride than to kindle ambition. But as the Scripture points out our original dignity, and the true glory of our nature, ſo every true penitent is there taught to aſpire after the nobleſt character, and to entertain the moſt exalted hopes. In the paſſage which I have choſen as the ſubject of my diſcourſe, you ſee the apoſtle exhorts the Theſſalonians to walk ſuitably to the dignity of their character, and the importance of their privileges, which is a ſhort but juſt deſcription of true and genuine greatneſs of mind.

My ſingle purpoſe from theſe words at this time, is to explain and recommend magnanimity as a Chriſtian virtue; and I wiſh to do it in ſuch a manner, as neither to weaken its luſtre, nor admit any degree of that corrupt mixture by which it is often counterfeited and greatly debaſed. Some infidels have in terms affirmed, that Chriſtianity has baniſhed magnanimity, and by its precepts of meekneſs, humility, and paſſive ſubmiſſion to injury, has deſtroyed that nobleneſs of ſentiment which rendered the ancients ſo illuſtrious, and gives ſo much majeſty and dignity to the hiſtories of Greece and Rome. In oppoſition to this I hope to be able to ſhew, that real greatneſs is inſeparable from ſincere piety; and that any defect in the one, muſt neceſſarily be a diſcernible blemiſh in the other. With this view I will, firſt, give you the principles of magnanimity in general, as a natural quality; ſecondly, I will ſhew what is neceſſary to give it real value, as a

moral virtue; thirdly, ſhew that it ſhines with the moſt perfect brightneſs as a Chriſtian grace; and afterwards improve the ſubject by a practical application of what may be ſaid, for your inſtruction and direction.

Firſt, then, let me ſtate the principles of magnanimity in general, as a natural quality. I think it muſt be admitted, that as there is a real difference between bodies, as to ſize and bulk, as well as other ſenſible qualities, ſo there is a real character of greatneſs, or meanneſs, applicable to the mind, diſtinct from its other qualities or powers. It is, however, I apprehend, a ſimple impreſſion, which cannot be explained or further analyſed, but may eaſily be felt, and is beſt illuſtrated by its effects. Theſe may be ſummed up in the following particulars: To magnanimity it belongeth to attempt, 1. Great and difficult things. 2. To aſpire after great and valuable poſſeſſions. 3. To encounter dangers with reſolution. 4. To ſtruggle againſt difficulties with perſeverance; and, 5. To bear ſufferings with fortitude and patience.

1. It belongs to magnanimity to attempt great and difficult things. Thoſe who, from a love of ſloth and eaſe, neglect the exerciſe or improvement of their powers, and thoſe who apply them with ever ſo great aſſiduity and attention, to things mean or of ſmall conſequence, are plainly deſtitute of this quality. We perceive a meanneſs and want of ſpirit in this reſpect, when particular perſons fall below their rank in life; or when, as is too frequently

the caſe in any rank, they fall below human nature itſelf. When a prince, or other perſon of the firſt order and importance in human life, buſies himſelf in nothing but the moſt trifling amuſements, or arts of little value, we call it mean; and when any man, endowed with rational powers, loſes them through neglect, or deſtroys them by the moſt grovelling ſenſuality, we ſay he is acting below himſelf. The contrary of this, therefore, or the vigorous exertion of all our powers, and particularly the application of them to things of moment and difficulty, is real magnanimity.

2. It belongs to magnanimity to aſpire after great and valuable poſſeſſions. It is more difficult properly to illuſtrate this as a branch of magnanimity, becauſe of its frequent perverſion, which will be afterwards explained. It ſeems, however, to be neceſſarily included in the general character. A great mind has great capacities of enjoyment as well as action. And as there is a difference between the bleſſings in our view, both in point of dignity and extent, ſuch a man will not be eaſily ſatisfied, or put up with what is either mean or ſcanty, while he can acquire and poſſeſs a better and more extenſive portion. The large and increaſing deſires of the human mind, have often been made an argument for the dignity of our nature, and our having been made for ſomething that is great and excellent.

3. It belongs to magnanimity to encounter dangers with reſolution. This is inſeparable from, and conſtitutes a leading part of the character. Even,

the moſt excellent and valuable ſervices to mankind, if they are attended with no difficulty at all, or meet with no oppoſition, though they retain the character of utility, yet, for want of this circumſtance, they loſe that of greatneſs. Courage is always conſidered as a great quality; it has had the admiration, or rather adoration, of mankind in every age. Many, when they ſpeak of magnanimity, mean nothing elſe but courage, and when they ſpeak of meanneſs, have little other idea but that of timidity. Neither is there, I think, any human weakneſs that is more the object of contempt and diſdain than cowardice, which, when applied to life in general, is commonly called puſillanimity.

4. It belongs to greatneſs to ſtruggle againſt difficulties with ſteadineſs and perſeverance. Perſeverance is nothing elſe but continued and inflexible courage. We ſee ſome perſons, who ſhew the greateſt activity and boldneſs for a ſeaſon, but time and oppoſition weakens their force, and ſeems, if I may ſpeak ſo, to exhauſt their courage, as if they waſted the power by the exertion. Perſeverance, therefore, is neceſſary to greatneſs. Few things are more contrary to this character, than ficklenеſs and unſteadineſs. We commonly join together the characters of weak and changeable.

5. In the laſt place, it belongs to greatneſs to bear ſufferings with fortitude and patience. This is a kindred quality to the former, and is neceſſary to complete the character of magnanimity. Such is the ſtate of human things, that ſuffering is, in one way or another, wholly unavoidable. It often hap-

pens, that difficulties cannot be removed, or enemies cannot be conquered; and then it is the laſt effort of greatneſs of mind, to bear the weight of the one, or the cruelty of the other, with firmneſs and patience. This virtue has always been of the greateſt reputation. It is a well known ſaying of a heathen philoſopher, that a great man ſuffering with invincible patience, under a weight of misfortunes, is a ſight which even the gods muſt behold with admiration.

Having thus pointed out the principles, or rather enumerated the chief effects of magnanimity, as a natural quality, let us now, in the *ſecond* place, conſider what is neceſſary to give it real value, as a moral virtue. This is of the utmoſt importance, and muſt appear ſo to all who will conſider the ſubject with attention. That I may ſet the matter in as clear a light as poſſible, obſerve, that to render magnanimity a valuable quality, it muſt further have the following characters.

1. The object of our deſires muſt be juſt as well as great. Some of the nobleſt powers of the human mind have often been exerted in invading the rights, inſtead of promoting the intereſt and happineſs of mankind. As the hiſtory of the world is little elſe than the hiſtory of human guilt, ſo many of the moſt illuſtrious names tranſmitted down to us, have been thoſe of the moſt active and ſucceſsful deſtroyers of their fellow creatures. There may be, and there have been in ſuch perſons, many or moſt of the ingredients of natural greatneſs of mind; but theſe

have only ſerved to make the characters, in the eye of reaſon, more hideous and deteſtable.

2. Our deſires ought to be governed by wiſdom and prudence, as well as juſtice. If any perſon either forms difficult projects, or aſpires after great poſſeſſions, and in proſecution of his purpoſes exerts ever ſo much courage, fortitude and patience; yet, if theſe deſigns are leſs uſeful, or theſe poſſeſſions leſs valuable than others to which he might have applied the ſame talents, it cannot deſerve the name of true magnanimity. If any perſon, for example, forms a reſolution of exerting his ſkill in ſuch feats or performances as have nothing or very little valuable in them, but that they are difficult and uncommon, I think no man will pretend that he has any title to the character of greatneſs of mind, otherwiſe a rope-dancer might be a hero: or, if any perſon ſhould ſpend a whole life in the moſt unwearied application to the ſingle purpoſe of accumulating wealth, however vaſt his deſires, or however aſtoniſhing his ſucceſs, his merit would be very ſmall. Nay, we muſt be ſenſible that he has loſt many opportunities of doing ſignal ſervice to mankind, and of acquiring more valuable and durable enjoyments while in purſuit of this, which after all will diſappoint his hopes.

3. The principle of action muſt be honourable as well as the achievements illuſtrious. If a perſon does things ever ſo extraordinary in their nature, overcomes the greateſt difficulties, or braves the moſt formidable dangers, merely to make his name famous, we muſt at once perceive how much it de-

tracts even from his name itself. This is not the language of religion only, it is the language of reason, and the dictate of the human heart. An insatiable thirst for praise, is so far from being amiable, that it is hateful or contemptible. I am sensible that a thirst for fame is not only apparent in, but seems to have been confessed by many of the most distinguished heroes of antiquity; but as it certainly does abate, in a good degree, the lustre of their good actions, so the indulgence that is given them upon this head, is wholly owing to the disadvantages they lay under in a state of heathenism, and their ignorance of a better and nobler principle. "Nothing," says an eminent author, "can be great, the contempt of which is great;" and therefore, if a contempt of riches, a neglect of fame, and a readiness to sacrifice both to duty and usefulness, is one of the most glorious characters we can conceive, it is plain, that not the deeds, but the principle is the evidence, and not the head nor the hands of man, but the heart is the seat of genuine greatness.

4. In the last place, in order to real greatness, every attempt must be possible and rational, perhaps probable. Nothing is more common than to find persons, under the pretence of great and illustrious designs, prosecuting what is not of any value when obtained, and at the same time scarcely possible, and no way probable to be obtained at all. This is declining altogether from the line of greatness, and going into the path of extravagance. Again, should any man undertake what he was altogether unable to perform, however excellent the design were in

itſelf, we would not dignify it even with the name of ambition; he would acquire and deſerve the character, not of greatneſs, but of folly or madneſs.

On the whole, it is plain that theſe moral principles muſt enter into the compoſition of true greatneſs, and that, when they are wanting, the natural characters mentioned before degenerate into vice, and aſſume the names of pride, ambition, temerity, ferocity and obſtinacy.

This leads me, in the *third* place, to ſhew, not only that there is nothing in real religion contrary to magnanimity, but that there, and there only, it appears in its beauty and perfection. Let me briefly run over, and apply to religion, the above mentioned ingredients of magnanimity.

1. It is to attempt great and difficult things. Religion calls us to the greateſt and moſt noble attempts, whether in a private or a public view. In a private view it calls us to reſiſt and ſubdue every corrupt and ſinful paſſion, however ſtrongly the indulgence is ſolicited by the tempting object, or recommended by the artful ſeducer. The importance and difficulty of this ſtruggle, appears not only from the holy Scriptures, but from the experience and teſtimony of mankind in every age. What cautions are given by Solomon upon this ſubject! "He that is ſlow to anger, is better than the mighty, and he that ruleth his ſpirit, than he that taketh a city." The wiſeſt heathens have inculcated the neceſſity of ſelf-government, and the danger of ſurrounding temptation, by many inſtructive images. But why

ſhould I extend this part of the ſubject? How few are ſucceſsful in this attempt? This alone is a ſufficient proof that it is great and difficult, and every perſon exerciſed to godlineſs will be abundantly ſenſible of it, from the ſtate of his own heart.

In a public view, every good man is called to live and act for the glory of God and the good of others. Here he has as extenſive a ſcene of activity as he can poſſibly deſire. He is not indeed permitted to glory or to build an altar to his own vanity; but he is both permitted and obliged to exert his talents, to improve his time, to employ his ſubſtance, and to hazard his life in his Maker's ſervice, or his country's cauſe. Nor am I able to conceive any character more truly great, than that of one, whatever be his ſtation or profeſſion, who is devoted to the public good under the immediate order of Providence. He does not ſeek the bubble reputation in the deadly breach, but he complains of no difficulty, and refuſes no ſervice, if he thinks he carries the commiſſion of the King of kings.

2. The truly pious man aſpires after the greateſt and moſt valuable poſſeſſions. He deſpiſes, indeed, the uncertain and the unſatisfying enjoyments of time. His deſires after preſent enjoyments are ſubjected to the will of God. He has given them up without reſerve, yet his heavenly Father knoweth that he hath need of theſe things, and therefore he both aſks and hopes to receive what is ſuitable and neceſſary, and believes that a little that a juſt man hath, is better than the riches of many wicked. But the glorious object of the Chriſtian's ambition, is

the inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away. The honourable relation he ſtands in to God, as his adopted child in Chriſt Jeſus, inclines and authoriſes him to hope for this purchaſed poſſeſſion, and enables him to look down with becoming indifference, on all the glory of this tranſitory world. Let the rich man glory in his riches, and the wiſe man glory in his wiſdom; he only glories in this, that he knoweth the Lord, and ſhall be with him for ever.

3. True piety encounters the greateſt dangers with reſolution. The fear of God is the only effectual mean to deliver us from the fear of man. Experience has abundantly ſhewn, that the ſervants of Chriſt have adhered to his cauſe, and made profeſſion of his name, in oppoſition to all the terrors which infernal policy could preſent to them, and all the ſufferings with which the moſt ſavage inhumanity could afflict them. But as this belongs to the caſe of perſecution for conſcience ſake, which, by the peculiar kindneſs of Providence, is exceedingly rare among us, it is proper to obſerve, that every Chriſtian has frequent opportunities of manifeſting a holy reſolution in encountering the reproach and deriſion of worldly men, for adhering to his duty. And when we conſider how hard it is to bear reproach and ſcorn, called in Scripture, "the trial of cruel mockings," there will appear to be no ſmall meaſure of dignity and heroiſm in him who can calmly ſubmit to it from every quarter, rather than depart from his duty. There are not a few who are apt to boaſt of their ſpirit and reſolution, who

are yet unable to bear reproach, and meanly make the ſentiments of others, and the caprice of faſhion, the rule of duty, in place of the clear dictates of conſcience and the word of God. How contemptible is this, compared to the conduct of that man who ſeeks no fame but by honeſt means, and fears no reproach for honeſt actions, but contents himſelf with a ſilent and believing regard to him who ſeeth in ſecret, and who ſhall at laſt bring every work into judgment.

4. True piety perſeveres with conſtancy in oppoſition to continual trial. This is indeed what diſtinguiſhes the Chriſtian warfare from that of every other. It continues through life, and the laſt enemy to be overcome is death. In all the conflicts between men on earth, the iſſue may be ſpeedily expected, and the reward immediately beſtowed; but in religion, it is only he who ſhall endure to the end that ſhall be ſaved. This adds greatly to the difficulty, and ſeems to ſhew, not only the excellence and beauty, but the real dignity and magnanimity of the Chriſtian character.

5. In the laſt place, true piety endures ſuffering with patience and fortitude. If we reflect upon the number of ſuffering martyrs, whoſe teſtimonies are upon record, we ſhall ſee with what calmneſs and compoſure, with what undaunted firmneſs, and ſometimes with what exultation and triumph, they have gone to a ſcaffold, or been tied to a ſtake. Can any perſon, think you, who hath gone to the field of battle in queſt of glory, or who hath braved the danger of the ſeas in queſt of wealth or power, be

once compared with thoſe who have cheerfully given up the precious life, or ſubmitted their bodies to the torture, to keep their conſciences undefiled? But, my brethren, Chriſtian patience is much more frequently tried in another manner. The believer has made an unreſerved ſurrender of himſelf and his all to the diſpoſal of Providence. His faithfulneſs to this promiſe is brought almoſt every day to the trial. For the Chriſtian, then, to ſuffer reproach, without rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing; to be ſubmiſſive under the loſs of ſubſtance, and to ſay with Job, Job i. 21. "Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked ſhall I return thither: the Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; bleſſed be the name of the Lord;"—to yield up relations, and to ſay with David, 2 Sam. xii. 23. "I ſhall go to him, but he ſhall not return to me;"—to look forward to approaching death, and ſay with the apoſtle Paul, 2 Tim. iv. 6. "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand:"—this is magnanimity indeed; this is the moſt ſolid glory to which any child of Adam can poſſibly attain.

I proceed, in the laſt place, to make ſome practical improvement of what hath been ſaid.

1. You may learn, from what hath been ſaid, that whenever honour differs from conſcience, it is a treacherous guide; wherever ſpirit and dignity of mind, as a worldly virtue, differs from true religion, and even from the ſimplicity of the goſpel, it is falſe and ſpurious. The goſpel, it is true, will not ſuffer

men to ſeek revenge, or to delight in it. It will humble them in the ſight of God, and make them ſelf-denied in the preſence of men, yet it will conſtrain them not to refuſe any duty to the one, or any uſeful ſervice to the other. It will not ſuffer them to be ambitious of higher places of honour and truſt, but it will make them active and zealous in the duties of that place in which they already are. It will not ſuffer them to reſent injuries and gratify revenge, but it will make them withſtand a king upon his throne, if he preſume to interfere in the matters of their God. What is there here that is not noble?

After all, the teſtimony in favour of true piety is univerſal, if carefully attended to. Every one muſt acknowledge that oſtentation, and love of praiſe, and whatever is contrary to the ſelf-denial of the goſpel, tarniſhes the beauty of the greateſt actions. Courage and modeſty, merit and humility, majeſty and condeſcenſion, appear with ten-fold glory when they are united; it is impoſſible to ſeparate them; to divide is to deſtroy them. They are like light and ſhade in a picture, which are neceſſary to each other, and which by their union conſtitute the beauty, and augment the luſtre of the piece. So true is this, that the higheſt poliſh that any perſon can receive in commerce with the world, is to have an apparent diſpoſition to prefer the intereſt of others to his own, to guard againſt every degree of offence, and to be always ready to oblige. I have often been pleaſed with that obſervation of

a foreigner of high rank *, that worldly politeneſs is only an imperfect imitation of Chriſtian charity; it is nothing elſe but a ſtudied appearance of that deference to the judgment, and attention to the intereſt of others, which a true Chriſtian hath as the rule of his duty, and the diſpoſition of his heart.

2. Suffer me to obſerve, that as Chriſtian magnanimity is more excellent than that of the world, it is alſo more practicable, and, in fact, more univerſal. Worldly magnanimity is what always requires ſuch talents as do not fall to the lot of many, and ſuch opportunities for its exerciſe as ſeldom occur. The road to heroiſm is not open to every man. But that magnanimity which is the fruit of true religion being indeed the product of divine grace, is a virtue of the heart, and may be attained by perſons of mean talents and narrow poſſeſſions, and in the very loweſt ſtations of human life. In fact there have been, and are daily examples of it in every rank. We ſee the heroic fortitude of the martyrs, as manifeſt in thoſe of early years, and the weaker ſex, as in any other; and whoever will viſit the ſolitary walks of life, may find, in the loweſt ſtations, humility, thankfulneſs, patience under affliction, and ſubmiſſion to Providence, ſuch as would do honour to the moſt approved virtue, and the moſt enlightened mind. To deſpiſe riches, and reſtrain the motions of envy and impatience, in a needy ſtate, is perhaps as truly noble as to improve them wiſely in a higher.

Thus the honour which is chiefly deſireable, is

* The Prince of Conti.

equally open to the rich and to the poor, to the learned and to the unlearned, to the wise and to the unwise, as it cometh from God, who is no respecter of persons. One of the best and happiest effects of serious reflection is to bring us, in a great measure, all upon a level; as, indeed, in one most important respect, the magistrate with his robes, the scholar with his learning, and the day-labourer that stands unnoticed, are all upon the same footing—for we must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ.

END OF VOL. V.

J. RITCHIE, PRINTER.

CPSIA information can be obtained at www.ICGtesting.com
Printed in the USA
BVOW060320130313

315427BV00004B/295/P

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